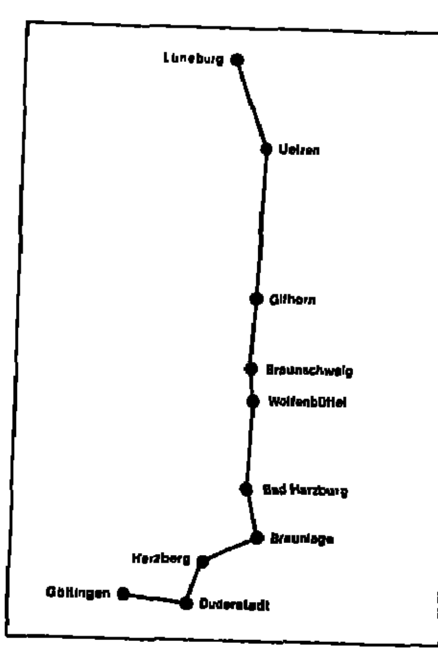
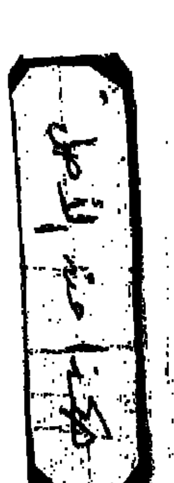




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High hopes that 1987 will be year of disarmament

General-Anzeiger

Chancellor Kohl hopes 1987 will be a year of disarmament. There are grounds for his hopes even though there are only 10 months remaining in the year.

This deadline is set by the run up to the US Presidential election campaign. President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachov will have to agree on a trailblazing part arms control agreement by autumn at the latest.

The start made in Reykjavik will then probably be brought to a halt because of the problems of an election year in America and the initial difficulties a new President will have in settling in.

But there is still hope that President Reagan will be part of a deal in spite of his political fatigue over Irangate and the shadows over the last lap of his presidency.

An East-West agreement on arms limitation could yet make his time at the White House a memorable chapter in US history.

Gorbachov sees disarmament as part of his plans to boost economic efficiency. His aim is, in the final analysis, to arrive at agreed security on less expensive, less explosive terms.

The road to agreement along which both sides must travel is paved with obstacles, but they are obstacles that can be surmounted.

That applies to Soviet insistence on a linkage between major disarmament agreements on, say, Eurostrategic weapons, and SDI.

It also applies to the new rhetoric mainly encountered among American SDI hawks who see early deployment of anti-missile systems in outer space as possible and are keen to widen the terms defined in the 1972 ABM Treaty with the Soviet Union.

Some SDI strategists see the space weapons project primarily as an "insurance policy" against a possible decline in Soviet interest in disarmament.

They feel Moscow will show greater readiness to meet Washington halfway if the pace is forced on SDI.

They could be wrong. Both sides need to make it clear they have no intention of unilaterally breaking the bounds of an agreed interpretation on the development and testing of anti-missile missiles.

This is the sole understanding, possibly including a reinterpretation of the ABM Treaty and a new timetable, on which part of the reciprocal rapprochement achieved at Reykjavik might be continued and brought to a conclusion.

That is all Chancellor Kohl means in warning the Americans not to establish faits accomplis. He and other European members of Nato favour as narrow as possible an interpretation of the ABM Treaty.

Richard Perle and Paul Nitze were told in London, before flying to Bonn, how worried Europeans were about the effect more generous American ABM interpretations might have on disarmament talks.

Despite strong words by US government officials that might lead one to believe the opposite, Washington is well aware of and inclined to respect the European factor in the disarmament dialogue.

It includes a determination to maintain a common defence and not just a desire to improve relations with the Soviet Union and other countries in Eastern Europe.

The Federal Republic of Germany in particular is duty bound to pursue a frank dialogue with the East — subject, of course, to the dictates of interest. The outcome of such endeavours will depend to a crucial extent on how willing and able the superpowers are to reach agreement, and it is up to European politics to promote the possibility.

But it must on no account lay itself open to as much as the suspicion of equidistance from the powers that are bound to play the leading parts in the dialogue.

Even where there can be no mistaking criticism of an ally it must be clear where a country stands.

Friedhelm Kemna

(General-Anzeiger, Bonn, 26 February 1987)



Assistant Secretary of Defence Richard Perle (left) and Presidential adviser on arms control Paul Nitze (centre) meet Chancellor Kohl in Bonn. (Photo: AP)

IN THIS ISSUE

Better relations with Moscow a prime foreign-policy aim

Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger

Serious disputes over foreign policy between the coalition parties are unlikely, say government sources. The broad outlines have already been drawn up.

The parties, the CDU, the CSU and the FDP, are in the process of determining outlines of government policy over the next four years.

They broadly agreed on East-West affairs, including detente, and on disarmament and arms control.

Views still differ to some extent on South Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and cultural diplomacy, but none of these issues is likely to be dealt with at length in the coalition agreement.

The Chancellor appears to have issued instructions to reach agreement on foreign policy as soon as possible and not to get entangled in details.

This approach is based on the realisation that, as the Chancellor's Office puts it: "World affairs are not governed by Bonn coalition agreements."

Bonn feels its main task in the next four years is to exert a stabilising influence in world affairs, and especially East-West affairs, with the emphasis on disarmament.

The government is keen to see arms limitation agreements reached this year, especially on the zero option for medium-range missiles in Europe, plus a ban on chemical weapons and a start on drastic reductions in US and Soviet strategic missile potentials.

The Bonn government is in no doubt that 1987 must be the Year of Disarmament, although enthusiasm about various proposals tabled in Geneva, such as the zero option, may vary in degree.

So Bonn attaches prime foreign policy importance to a substantial improvement in relations with the Soviet Union.

After intensive talks, especially between Mr Kvitsinsky, the Soviet ambassador in Bonn, and Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher, a rule of thumb seems to have emerged.

The aim seems to be a definite improvement in relations without either side losing face (after some recent disagreements).

There are clearly two currents of opinion in Bonn. Herr Genscher in particular attaches importance to a succession of highest-level visits in both directions as a cornerstone in improvements.

At the Chancellor's Office priority seems to be given to getting back to business as usual with as little delay as possible.

Dates must, for instance, be agreed for signing protocols on cooperation in health, atomic energy and agricultural research.

The Chancellor will certainly be making it clear in his government policy statement that a constructive relationship with Moscow is very much in Bonn's own interest.

As for relations with the United States, Bonn is contenting itself with the fairly reassuring impression Horst Teltschik, the Chancellor's foreign policy adviser, recently brought back from

Continued on page 3

■ WORLD AFFAIRS

Weinberger puts case for keeping US troops in Europe, but debate heats up

Frankfurter Allgemeine

US Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger must have suspected that he would be given a rough ride this year.

This is why he preferred to take the bull by the horns and make the first move in the debate on a possible withdrawal of American troops from Europe.

To impress a thrifty Congress he he gave priority to the argument of costs.

A withdrawal of troops, he said in a speech he gave in Denver in January, would be too expensive.

He wanted to convince the Senators and the members of the House of Representatives that it would cost more to "bring the boys back home" than to leave them where they are, above all in the Federal Republic.

It is not clear whether everyone in the Capitol got the message, since rumours of "reducing", "thinning out" or "shifting" the troops are still circulating.

Yet there is no reason for Germans to get alarmed.

The US government under President Reagan is determined to fight off all efforts for a "one-sided" withdrawal of troops.

There is clear internal agreement on this point between the Pentagon and the State Department.

Nevertheless, there is sufficient cause for concern in Bonn and Washington.

Isolationist feelings and a deeply-rooted opposition to the stationing of American troops abroad always exist subliminally in Congress.

What is more, now that the opposition Democrats are in the majority Congress has become more susceptible to public sentiment.

In the face of the huge American budget and trade balance deficits parliamentarians have an even greater leaning towards introspectiveness.

The magic number introduced to the debate is "one hundred thousand soldiers".

President Carter's former security adviser suggesting shifting this troop contingent to other regions (e.g. the Middle East), where they could presumably be put to better use.

Both the State Department and the Pentagon regard this as a "foolish idea".

The American troops in Europe — roughly 320,000 soldiers, of which 250,000 are stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany —have not, it is claimed, become superfluous because the threat posed by the Warsaw Pact has diminished.

The threat, the argument runs, has diminished because the troops are there.

During his speech in Colorado Caspar Weinberger estimated put the cost of a withdrawal of one hundred thousand soldiers at approximately $5bn for transportation, new barracks and maintenance costs.

A substantial amount, which above all the Germans pay to keep the American troops in Europe, would then be lost.

Since the financial side at least turned out to be a "milkmaid's calculation" plans to withdraw a division from South Korea were already dropped during Jimmy Carter's period in office.

Costs would only be really cut if there was a total demobilisation of the troops called back home.

Both the Pentagon and the State Department are worried that this "cheap alternative" might be accepted if Congress does decide to thin out troops in Europe.

In order to counteract any move in this direction the Reagan administration argues at various levels.

"Our troops are stationed in Europe because this is in our interests," said Weinberger.

The armed forces on the other side of the Atlantic, Weinberger maintained, guarantee security , holds the alliance together and prevents any de-coupling.

These are important aspects in an often emotionally-charged inner-American debate.

The arguments forwarded range from scepticism that the troops are "our hostages abroad" to the selfish view that "it's better to defend the United States in Europe than at home".

A new Nunn amendment, named after the current chairman of the Senate's Defence Committee, is not in sight.

The conservative Democratic Senator from Georgia, who unsuccessfully introduced a troop withdrawal motion in Congress two years ago (55 to 41 votes), knows that such threatening gestures can cut both ways.

As opposed to Senator Mansfield, whose isolationist tendencies spurred on his desire to reduce America's military presence in Europe, Nunn never intended to weaken the western alliance.

He simply wanted to shake up the Europeans and force them to step up their efforts in the field of conventional defence.

Nunn took note of the fact that the growth of the West German defence budget was considerable and — as opposed to the disjointed Carter and Reagan years — stable.

After six "fat years" for the Pentagon it will soon become clear whether its budget can manage more than zero growth at the end of the Reagan era.

The growing scarcity of funds and the associated distributional conflicts augment the imponderabilities in Congress.

Rationally and irrationally justified demands for a withdrawal of troops will play a part when the question of more money for the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) at the expense of conventional arms is raised.

When weighing up its own contributions towards the security of others many Americans cast an envious glance at a prosperous Europe.

Many a Senator and many of his voters have noticed that the standard of living and social security there is well above the American average.

It is obvious that this encourages the notion that there must be more money in Europe for common defence efforts.

The emphasis by the Bonn government of its own contributions to the efforts, however, has also been heard in Washington.

Bonn referred to the extension of the conscription period, the high quality standard of the Bundeswehr and the cooperative military programmes of the kind envisaged in the Nunn amendment.

The willingness of the Reagan administration to listen to Bonn, however, is no substitute for "groundwork" in Congress.

Despite the success of attempts to avert a "trade war" the protectionist mood in Congress has by no means disappeared.

The White House backs the political argument which has so far been able to convince Congress that a withdrawal of troops would not make sense: no one-sided move until a mutual and balanced reduction of forces has been negotiated with the Warsaw Pact.

Any "thinning out" of troops by the West before negotiations take place would probably make a compromise with the Soviet Union all the more difficult.

Leo Wieland

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 26 February 1987)

Schmidt call for a French-led Euro-force

Former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has called for a reorganisation of Europe's military defence system under French leadership.

In a speech on the occasion of the award of the Adolphe Bentinck Prize in Paris, Schmidt spoke of a need "to create a European nucleus for Europe's defence ...within the framework of Nato". Close cooperation between Bonn and Paris was essential.

His proposal was made because of what he regards as the declining determination in America to resort to nuclear weapons in any emergency in Europe.

He said this was shown *inter alia* by Reagan's SDI efforts, which "are presumably intended to rid the American people, but not Europe, of its fear of a nuclear war".

He said an adequate conventional counterbalance to the armed forces of he East bloc should be created. This was possible.

Europe, however, he said, must rid itself of its "overestimation of the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact and the quantity-mindedness of American leaders".

These notions, Schmidt complained, had led to a situation in which "everyone is so convinced of the vast quantitative superiority of the mass of Soviet soldiers, tanks and artillery in Eastern Europe" that "nothing other than nuclear weapons" seem able to combat the threat.

However, if the West were to rely on its first-strike ability in the field of tactical nuclear weapons, it must expect its opponent to also resort to nuclear weapons.

"As we Germans have a vital interest in preventing mutual self-destruction on German soil," Schmidt argued, "we have a compelling interest in establishing an adequate conventional counterbalance."

If the bulk of French troops including their mobilisable reserves were to serve this purpose, Schmidt continued, this could be done without great economic difficulties.

Herr Schmidt listed several aspects essential for the creation of a "European nucleus for Europe's defence":

Since both France and the Federal Republic of Germany recruit their armed forces via conscription it would be "easy" for these two countries to mobilise two million men.

He talked of 18 German and 12 French divisions.

He thought there would be a further five divisions from the Benelux countries and, in addition, the British, American and Canadian units.

Schmidt expressed his conviction that "on the basis of joint operational planning, command and leadership an armed forces unit of this strength would be enough to deter any Soviet leader from a conventional attack on Western Europe.

"In the case of defence it would be able to hold its own ground without forcing Western Europe to be first to resort to nuclear weapons."

Schmidt would like to see the current Nato command structure and its American commanders-in-chief replaced by an integrated Western European defence system with a French commander-in-chief in charge.

The latter should be answerable to the Council of the heads of state and government leaders of the countries affected.

Furthermore, Schmidt continued, the French commander-in-chief should be empowered to make all decisions other than the decision to use nuclear weapons.

This decision should be taken by the French president.

Via a unilateral declaration resulting from the French standby commitments in the Atlantic Treaty and the Western European Union Treaty the French president should extend the tasks of the autonomous *force de dissuasion* to cover the defence of the territory of Western Europe.

The additional conventional forces units needed for the defence situation should stock up with the necessary weapons, vehicles, ammunition and equipment over the next three to five years.

Bonn and Paris should share the costs. The expenditure for France's nuclear forces should also be taken into account as a full financial contribution.

Finally, Schmidt suggests, both countries should jointly develop and construct the conventional arms they require including reconnaissance satellites.

Rüdiger Moniac

(Die Welt, Bonn, 25 February 1987)

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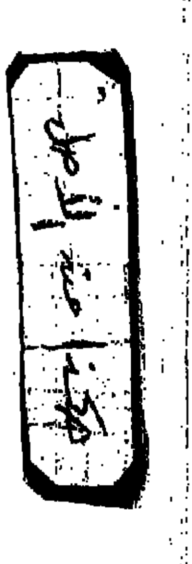
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■ HOME AFFAIRS

Mixed reaction to plan for cuts in income tax

STUTTGARTER NACHRICHTEN

Reforms of the income tax system which will leave most Germans with more take-home pay have been agreed on.

The deal was decided in talks between the members of the coalition parties in Bonn, the CDU/CSU and the FDP.

The package will be worth 44 billion marks to the taxpayer. Originally it was to have been only 40 billion marks.

There has been a mixed reaction to the package. Some see it as part of the "greatest tax reform in the history of the Federal Republic" (Chancellor Kohl's words in a pre-discussion promise)

Others, including the SPD, the Greens and a taxpayers' pressure group called the taxpayers' association, referred to it as "deceptive".

The truth lies somewhere in between. It is certainly no super reform as many were expecting. But it must be given some credit if it is compared with previous reforms and what is financially possible.

It is to be paid for by cutting state subsidies and public spending. But precisely how is still not clear.

The coalition's tax policy compromise has three main points in its favour: the amount involved (DM44bn), the linearisation of the tax scale and, finally, the socially fair distribution of tax relief.

Pressure on Bonn by the US government was undoubtedly a major reason why the originally planned tax relief figure of DM40bn was jacked up by 10 per cent to give the economy an additional boost.

Since the "paunch" of progressive taxation is to be replaced by a linear graduated system of taxation in 1990 the majority of taxpayers will feel the benefit.

The main bone of contention in coalition talks so far was that a growing number of taxpayers, above all skilled workers and middle-income salaried employees, were slipping deeper and deeper into a higher progressive tax scale. This had an adverse effect on the incentive to earn more money and led to growing dissatisfaction with the taxation system (and hence the respective government in power).

It was high time, therefore, that the "paunch of progression" started slimming.

The fact that the top tax rate was only reduced by three per cent (from 56 to 53 per cent) is not proof of an alleged social unfairness of the reform.

Such a claim is already disproved by the fact that basic tax rate has been cut from 22 to 19 per cent and that the basic tax-free amounts have been increased.

As a result the taxation curve will be less steep, which will benefit all taxpayers.

Taxpayers in the lower income bracket are not left empty-handed.

The opposition parties, the SPD and the Greens, will find it difficult to win votes during the coming Land elections by criticising the government for being cold-hearted.

The reform package deserves to be criticised for completely different reasons.

First of all, there is a justified accusation that the promised simplification of the tax system has not materialised.

The West German tax system is and will remain incomprehensible for the ordinary citizen. This in itself in unfair.

The successful attempts to thin out the legal jungle of tax provisions in the USA has not been emulated in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The second question is why this tax relief package is not planned to take effect until 1990.

Why isn't the tax-payer given what he deserves now?

This delay (election strategy?) considerably reduces the impact of the reform package.

Up to now the taxpayers have paid for a large part of the tax relief package themselves, since the tax rate has increased with every pay settlement increase.

The third point of criticism, however, the question of how the package is to be financed, is more significant.

Only DM25bn of the DM44bn promised will actually be paid by the government itself (net relief).

The West German public will be financing the remaining DM19bn via cuts in special benefits and subsidies.

It is still not clear what benefits will be cut or what subsidies will be reduced.

No-one really knows, therefore, who will have to foot the bill.

The merits of Bonn's tax reform plans can only be properly assessed when this question has been answered and the man in the street knows what the government is giving him with one hand and taking away with the other.

Up until then the coalition parties CDU, CSU and FDP have no claim to praise.

Wolfgang Bok

(Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 26 February 1987)

Continued from page 1

Washington. President Reagan, he reported, continued to be keenly interested in foreign policy progress, such as a disarmament agreement with the Soviet Union.

That is why the President is felt not to have committed himself yet on whether the United States will be more widely interpreting the ABM Treaty terms with a view to early deployment of SDI systems.

What worries Bonn is the deadline that limits this relatively optimistic assessment. Failing a disarmament agreement and a fresh summit conference with the Soviet leader by early autumn, Bonn feels, President Reagan's line of argument could be reversed.

He might well then try to make crucial headway at least on SDI so as to safeguard his foreign and security policy legacy. America's allies would then be in a difficult position, but Bonn feels they have a breathing-space for the time being.

Thomas Meyer

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 24 February 1987)



New forum . . . the former waterworks building where the Bundestag is meeting until its own building is renovated. (Photo: Sven Simon)

Willy Brandt gets Bundestag off to a rowdy start

The first session of the Bundestag after the general election got off to a noisy start.

No sooner had Bonn's established parties (the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the SPD) defeated a Greens motion than the chairman of the SPD, Willy Brandt, got up and talked about precisely what the Greens had wanted to talk about.

As the oldest member of the Bundestag, Brandt was also by tradition, the first speaker in the opening debate.

Ellen Olms, a Green, had put forward a motion that the Bundestag discuss the plight of the Palestinians in Lebanese refugee camps.

The motion was rejected by the CDU/CSU, SPD and FDP. To everyone's surprise, however, Willy Brandt then broached the subject himself by referring in detail to the plight of all refugees in refugee camps throughout the world.

The votes which followed also showed that the Greens, who have now moved into the Bundestag for a second parliamentary term, are still treated like the Bundestag's "dirty kids" (according to Greens member Christa Nickels) and "trouble-makers" (said Theo Waigel, the CSU).

The proposal by the Greens that Christa Nickels should be elected as the Bundestag's fifth Deputy Speaker was rejected.

The chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary party, Alfred Dregger, expressed his opinion that the Greens are adequately represented via their chairmanship of two Bundestag committees.

This view was backed by all the other CDU, CSU and FDP politicians in the Bundestag.

They began by rejecting the motions proposed by the SPD and Greens for an increase in the number of Deputy Speakers from four to five.

As the SPD was unwilling to relinquish one of the two Deputy Speaker posts to which it is entitled Christa Nickels stood no chance whatsover in the final vote. She suffered the same fate as her Greens colleague Christa Reentz four years ago.

In fact, the whole constituent gathering had a touch of *déjà vu*, often looking like a rehash of the first sitting of the 10th Bundestag on 29 March, 1983.

Willy Brandt was also the oldest Bundestag member back in 1983, and all motions forwarded by the Greens relating to the standing orders of the Bundestag were also rejected at that time.

Admittedly, the venue has changed, today's Bundestag debates taking place in a former waterworks.

Philipp Jenninger has taken over from Rainer Barzel as Bundestag Speaker, and the Greens didn't march into the Bundestag this time carrying flowers, shrubs and green fir-tree twigs.

Some of the charm accompanying the Greens premiere appearance in the Bundestag four years ago was missing.

All the members of the Greens parliamentary party did this time was to unfold a banner with the words "Census Boycott" for the photographers in front of the restored waterworks building.

The way in which the various parliamentary parties in the 11th Bundestag were constituted also showed signs of ossification and a marked tendency not to accept anything new.

There has been very little reshuffling of leading positions in the parliamentary parties of the CDU/CSU, SPD or FDP.

Rebellious candidates in the FDP, such as Hildegard Hamm-Brücher, were called to order at an early stage.

There is virtually no change at the top of the CDU/CSU parliamentary party.

The most prominent victim of this stonewalling will probably be the chairman of the North Rhine-Westphalia CDU, Kurt Biedenkopf, who predicted a "creative period" in the Bundestag after the general election.

Although it has been obvious for some time that Biedenkopf, who is the leader of the strongest CDU Land group, would not be offered a ministerial post, it now looks as if the current parliamentary group leaders would also prefer not to have him as a deputy chairman. The Greens are once again the exception to the rule.

When "staking out their claims" there was some tough in-fighting between the various wings within the party. After a representative of the "ecosocialist" wing, Thomas Ebermann, was voted onto the parliamentary party's executive committee the "Realos" (pragmatists) moved into the offensive.

They tried to edge members of the "Fundi" (fundamentalists) wing off the various party committees. They were successful in almost all cases.

The fundamentalists only managed to get their members into less important positions.

Klaus Dreher

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, 19 February 1987)

■ POLITICS

SPD, Greens circle each other sort of concentrically

DEUTSCHES ALLGEMEINES SONNTAGSBLATT

The general election in January which returned the conservative coalition, has had a more radical effect on relations between the Greens (who increased their share of the vote) and the Social Democrats (who did not).

The drama over the past few weeks overshadows anything in the months before. Much of what is happening is not making a great deal of sense.

The two parties have been making cautious approaches to each other. At the same time, the only coalition in the country between them, in Hesse, collapsed. These two factors are two sides of a tense and complicated situation.

Particularly surprising are the number of bitter exchanges taking place at the very time when the parties need to sort out their own identities.

In several of the *Länder* and at federal level, the Greens and the SPD are circling each other like mistrustful dogs. The possibility of coalition arrangements is there, even if no one quite knows in what form.

And then, of all times, the coalition which was meant to be a model for Green-Red coalitions, the Hesse coalition, came to grief. The way the two parties have argued the matter shows that the nuclear plant that was meant to be at the heart of the matter was more a catalyst than a real reason for the break.

The responsibility on that issue was Bonn's, not Wiesbaden's (Wiesbaden is the seat of government in Hesse). As often is the case, one has to dig deeper to find the reasons for a break like this. Now those on both sides who were against the pact in the first place are overjoyed.

The break and its ramifications show that the time is not yet ripe for a coalition of this sort at federal level. Both parties are so *undecided about themselves* that any deal to get them working together would be only a continual test of nerves.

A coalition between the two would have different consequences for both parties. Internal disputes about a Red-Green relationship weaken the SPD's image as an old popular party. Whereas the Greens' image is as the party of the new type of voter.

Unity within the Greens would appear to be of less importance to their voters. Protest is more important to them than sharing power.

The process for the Social Democrats is more painful. They have to gauge themselves by traditional criteria. The SPD more than any other party are suffering from social and cultural changes.

Traditional working class culture is disappearing. They are losing voters and finding it hard to get new ones.

Willy Brandt's attempt to bridge the old and new class of voter has only succeeded in blurring the SPD's profile.

Despite that the SPD does not appear to have an alternative to this difficult plan of campaign.

The middle ground is already occupied. And to leave the left to the Greens would leave them in a minority to the a two figure result election result. The SPD is not in an envious position. The problems they face are at least as difficult as those of the fifties, which led to the Grand Coalition and Social-Liberal coalition. The Greens have just as many problems. They cannot be explained away by their newness on the scene. Like the SPD they have to get the different currents in the party to agree on a policy despite having less internal cohesion and loyalty than the SPD.

Oskar Lafontaine and Hermann Rappe belong to differernt wings of the SPD but they would not treat one another as brutally as Otto Schily and Thomas Ebermann of the Greens have done. Between both of them lies not merely the middle ground but a world.

Are the differences between the two parties unbridgeable? Before and after the debacle in Wiesbaden, the outgoing Hesse Environment Minister at the eye of the storm, Joschka Fischer, said "I fear that a historic opportunity has been lost."

Many observers would agree. Especially after the resignation of Holger Börner, the SPD Premier of Hesse, who was physically and psychologically tired. Börner's decision not to stand again in the Hesse poll has reduced the chances of another coalition being *formed in Wiesbaden.*

Talk of a historical opportunity is probably exaggerated. The Liberal and conservative coalition means they are forced to come to terms with each other in the future if they want to avoid becoming spectators of how the others govern. But first the relationship needs some time for fermentation and clarification.

The contradictions inherent in the challange of building a new ecologically minded industrial society with a new internal and external security make the Hesse complaints look like child's play.

Before they talk about partnership they should take the advice of marriage guidance counsellors, and sort themselves out first.

Rudolf Grosskopff

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg 15 February 1987)



Doors open, doors Klose . . . Hans-Ulrich Klose. (Photo: Wa...)

Politician makes a comeback

A former mayor of Hamburg, Hans-Ulrich Klose, has been elected treasurer of the national Social Democrat party. The job is a lot more important than it sounds and is a boost for the challenge of the party's left led by Oskar Lafontaine.

Only a few weeks ago, Klose withdrew from the list of candidates for deputy leadership of the parliamentary party when it became apparent that he would not get a majority. Klose was disappointed at what he saw as a gap opening up between his wing, the left, and a resurgent right wing. Traditionally, the left has been stronger.

Now Klose has reason to celebrate. Lafontaine paved the way for him. It is a boost for Lafontaine because, earlier in the contest which is developing to find a successor to Willy Brandt as party chairman, Lafontaine made more enemies than friends.

It seems that the present party leader in the Bundestag, Hans-Jochen Vogel, is the favourite to take over from Brandt. That is probably why Lafontaine has decided not to try and find a place on the national executive.

And in any case, Klose's appointment strengthens his hand on the executive by putting in a trusted friend.

Jochim Stoltenberg

(Hamburger Abendblatt, 24 February 1987)

Blow for the left

Hans-Ulrich Klose, the new treasurer of the Social Democrats, is a representative of the hard-line, anti-nuclear wing of the party.

Klose was born in Breslau in 1937. He joined the Social Democrat party in 1964. He eventually became mayor of Hamburg, but resigned in May 1981, when he clashed with the majority of his party which was in favour of putting a nuclear power plant into service at Brokdorf, near Hamburg.

His resignation was sudden, but not unexpected. In its wake, Brokdorf became the scene of huge demonstrations.

The Hamburg SPD tried to repair these internal differences of opinion by accepting Klose's resignation and bringing in (the more conservative) Klaus von Dohnanyi as mayor.

For two years, Klose, who had been among the brightest party hopes, was in the political wilderness. But in 1983 he was elected to the Bundestag in Bonn. he was soon marked out by some as a possible successor to the party's business manager, Peter Glotz. His election as treasurer is regarded as an extension of the Oskar Lafontaine faction.

(Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf, 24 February 1987)

A tall ecologist reaches for some new stars

The reputations of many politicans derives from the obscurity of their personalities and the clarity of their speeches and deeds. Their own party members often diagree strongly about their merits.

Thomas Ebermann, one of three new speakers for the Greens in the Bundestag, is such a politican. He belongs to the fundamentalist wing of the party (which basically believes in not entering coalitions with established parties).

His nickname of "Langer" (Tiny) was given him by his former communist colleagues because of his height (he is 6ft 4in).

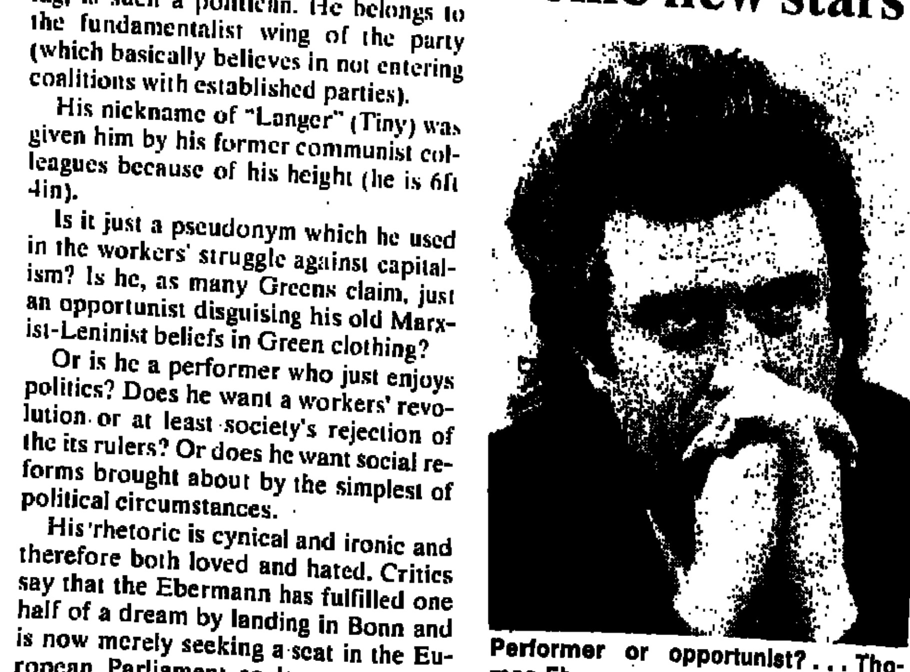
Is it just a pseudonym which he used in the workers' struggle against capitalism? Is he, as many Greens claim, just an opportunist disguising his old Marxist-Leninist beliefs in Green clothing?

Or is he a performer who just enjoys politics? Does he want a workers' revolution or at least society's rejection of the its rulers? Or does he want social reforms brought about by the simplest of political circumstances.

His rhetoric is cynical and ironic and therefore both loved and hated. Critics say that the Ebermann has fulfilled one half of a dream by landing in Bonn and is now merely seeking a seat in the European Parliament so he can one day collect a fat pension.

Is all this pure irony? In his speechs he turns current arguments into their opposite.

Asked whether Kohl's government had deceived the voter, he says no. By stationing missiles and cutting social services it had kept its word.



Performer or opportunist? . . . Thomas Ebermann. (Photo: Poly-Press)

He often says to the Realo wing (which does believe in forming coalitions with established parties under certain circumstances) that he is the only one who believes the SPD when they say they will not work with the Greens.

It is hard to pin his views down. When Green moralists asked him whether he would support a boycott of tax going on armaments, he said "I'm open minded about people who want to avoid paying tax." As regards to violence he is equally vague. He said he himself would not engage in it.

He denies that he is the puppet master of the eco-socialists, who like no other group understand how to gain control of important office. He maintains he gets his orders from Hamburg. Some reproaches he says are a deliberate mystification. Others on the other hand he leaves open.

Ebermann was born in Hamburg in 1951. He went to a vocational secondary school, which for someone from his background was looked upon as daring.

He wanted to become a teacher at a technical school. But he had to leave because he interpreted anti-authoritarian teaching too literally. He was drafted into the army, where he was classified as lazy and unsuitable. After that he worked in a rubber factory in Hamburg.

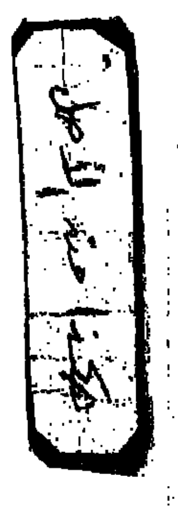
Later he met Rainer Trampert in the Communist league. They have been close ever since.

They left the communists and later joined the Greens to take a position against bourgeois conservationists.

They are not interested in forming a popular party in the sense that Otto Schily, the Realo is. They are looking to the demonstrator scene to gain influence.

Ebermann's position will be to resist the opposition of "realpolitik" and to draw a demarcation line between the Greens and the SPD. *Günter Bannas*

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 18 February 1987)



■ PERSPECTIVE

East Germans just love that capitalist cash

The West German mark is known as the Westmark in East Germany. In spite of East Germany's Communist government, the Westmark plays a role in the economy.

It is an embarrassing subject for a socialist country. Some people have quantities of the Westmark, symbol of the hated capitalist system over the Wall, and can therefore buy lots of good things that come from the West.

Others have none, and therefore have to make do with whatever the East German currency can get them — which is not much by comparison.

The topic of Westmarks naturally doesn't get much of a public airing in East Germany. But it is recognised as a contradiction and discussed at party conferences.

The Westmark has virtually created a two-class society. With it, East Germans can buy otherwise unobtainable products in Intershop stores (where only foreign currency is accepted) or on the black market.

They can also get preferential treatment in better restaurants and solve many day-to-day problems like getting round in a hurry that plumber others have to wait months for. Or any other tradesman.

With the Westmark, East Germans also stand a better chance of getting popular private holiday accommodation on East Germany's Baltic coast.

The money of the capitalists makes the impossible possible, goes the saying.

Stalwart Communist Party officials succumb to the temptation.

The problem is often discussed in Communist Party circles or during party conferences.

In contrast to the media the political satirists in East Germany have their own special way of coping with this "social phenomenon".

Due to their "safety-valve" function they are allowed to openly refer to many hotly-disputed topics.

Wolfgang Schaller's *Lied vom Gießer und den Kings* (Song about the Foundryman and the Kings) is one of the most popular songs in this genre.

The lyrics tell the story of a worker who wants to drink a beer in an almost empty restaurant.

He is ignored by the two waiters, however, who are more interested in serving a West German couple.

The song describes how they "dance around" and "grovel" to the West German guests.

In a study published in East Berlin entitled "On the Function of Satire in Socialism" Schaller's song was chosen to illustrate the effect of satire.

Reference is made to the "impulse to the public to depart from the dimension of suffering and take a more amusing, i.e. relaxed, look at the solvability of the respective antagonism".

The underlying intention is for the audience to perceive satire as a "relieving experience".

The study's author points towards a major contradiction in the "currency problem". On the one hand, "various

Continued on page 6

Industrialist welcomes Soviet economic cooperation proposal

Was the Moscow Forum "for a nuclear-free world and the survival of mankind" merely a propagandist publicity stunt on behalf of the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov?

Heinrich Weiss, managing director of the Düsseldorf-based mechanical engineering group Schloemann-Siemag AG, is one leading West German industrialist who feels that such an assertion is far from the truth.

Weiss, who attended the Workshop for Economic Cooperation at the Forum, referred to the very professional and liberal mood of discussions in Moscow.

He was not only impressed by what was said but also by the whole way the event was organised.

The seating arrangements for the delegations from the USSR, the USA, Canada, Japan, the Western European and the East bloc countries (excluding China), for example, were the first surprise.

Instead of seating East and West opposite one another the delegations were intermixed by the Soviet hosts.

The guests from the Federal Republic of Germany sat next to the delegates from the GDR.

With a total of 300 delegates, however, the planned round-table discussion proved impossible.

Nevertheless, delegations from all countries were able to give detailed accounts of their experience in East-West trade and their ideas on new forms of cooperation.

Weiss confessed that he initially had mixed feelings about his invitation to come to Moscow.

His misgivings were dispelled, however, after talking with his hosts.

The fact that the Federal Republic of Germany was represented at the Forum by leading industrialists, whereas the other delegations primarily consisted of political officials, is an indication of the importance attached to trade ties between the two countries.

The spokesman of the board of governors of the Dresdner Bank, F. Wilhelm Christians, the chairman of the East-West Trade Committee of German Industry, Otto Wolf von Amerongen, Berthold Beitz (Krupp), Wolfgang Liesen (Ruhrgas) and Werner Dieter (Mannesmann) were just some of the prominent guests.

This is a clear sign of the interest shown by local firms in attempts to reform the Soviet economy.

The Federal Republic is the Soviet Union's most important western trading partner.

Trade ties between the two countries, however, could do with some stimulation.

Due to the drop in the prices of crude oil and gas the volume of German-Soviet trade (in both directions) fell from DM14bn to DM7bn last year.

It is hardly surprising that West German firms have taken up the Soviet request to elaborate proposals for new forms of cooperation.

Hopes for a speedy conclusion to joint venture agreements, however, are subdued by West German industrialists.

The legal and organisational obstacles along the way, they claim, are still substantial.

Capital investment by West German firms would have to be safeguarded by investment protection agreements, double taxation agreements, patent protection agreements as well as other international agreements.

This requires time-consuming negotiations.

For this reason Heinrich Weiss presented a multi-stage plan in Moscow, which he feels is a more practicable approach and which has already proved its worth with other countries.

- The first stage would involve cooperation in the form of production in the Soviet Union.

West German suppliers would let some products parts be produced in Soviet factories.

This means that the Soviets would not have to find foreign exchange for these parts.

- A second stage would entail the joint design of products by Soviet engineers and their West German colleagues.
- Stage three, namely the classic licence agreement, could begin as soon as the Soviet side has gathered sufficient experience in production and product development.

The German exporter could then issue a licence for the production of certain products, which the Soviet partner could then manufacture and market independently.

The licensor would receive a fixed percentage fee and as a rule continue to supply certain high-technology components.

According to Weiss joint ventures only stand a chance of success after both sides have gathered experience within the framework of these three stages.

Heinrich Weiss at least is convinced that Soviets are keen on his idea.

The Soviet Union does not perceive the joint venture concept in such concrete terms as "capitalist states", he points out, but feels that the concept marks the direction in which economic relations should develop.

Moscow has chosen the mechanical engineering industry as a kind of guinea-pig for its modernisation plans.

Weiss expects supply agreements to be drawn up in this field in the near future, which would correspond to the first stage of his multi-stage strategy.

The particular interest of the Soviet Union in reforming the mechanical engineering sector is reflected is recent planning target figures announced in Moscow.

By the year 2000 80 per cent of the products in this field are expected to match international standards and be exportable.

The mechanical engineering branch is particularly well-suited as an "icebreaker" for cooperation with western industrialised countries, since it is both technologically sophisticated and not excessively affected by the provisions of the Cocom List.

The Moscow Peace Forum can be regarded as a logically consistent step in Gorbachov's new policy, which began with the elaboration of a theoretical foundation, was then consolidated via top-level personnel changes and is now being strengthened via an international publicity campaign.

If the Forum is interpreted as a signal for the West, it was even more of a signal to the Soviet citizens themselves.

It showed them that there is no turning back from the policy of reform.

Any attempt to do so now would mean a serious and dangerous loss of face for Mikhail Gorbachov and the Soviet system as a whole.

Theo Mönch-Tegeder

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 20 February 1987)

■ FINANCE

Paris talks crisis threat to world economic summit

The world economic summit scheduled to be held in Venice in June is in jeopardy following a crisis at the Paris meeting of the Group of Seven finance ministers. Italy pulled out its representative after discovering that five of the national representatives had held a working meeting beforehand. Neither Italy nor Canada were present (the others were the United States, Germany, Japan, Britain and France). Italy says that meeting was in breach of an agreement reached at the economic summit in Tokyo last year.

The Paris meeting of the finance ministers from the US, Japan, Britain, France, Italy, Canada and West Germany will go down in history as the Louvre Agreement.

French Finance Minister Edouard Balladur lives in a wing of the Louvre. He invited his colleagues from the six other industrialised states to join him there to discuss closer cooperation between their countries to stabilise the dollar exchange rate.

The ministers sat in marathon sessions over the weekend, shielded from the public by a massive police security operation.

The first result of this meeting was something of a provincial farce. Italian Finance Minister Giovanni Goria, offended because he was not given the importance he felt he deserved, left early.

The chair of the only minister with a beard remained empty at the summit meeting. Only six finance ministers were involved.

What they had to say to waiting journalists did not seem to justify the high-sounding name "Louvre Agreement."

The text of the communiqué distributed to the press did not seem to indicate that the politicians had indeed grappled with the economic problems facing them.

Finance Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg, for instance, confirmed his willingness to cut back further government spending in the economy and to reform the West German tax system extensively.

He went on to say that monetary policy would "support conditions for continued economic growth by maintaining price stability."

The only passage new in the communiqué, from the West German point of view, was that Stoltenberg gave assurances that he would propose to the Bonn government that "the tax relief planned for 1988 should be greater in scope."

Did he really have to go to Paris to make this proposal that makes good sense on economic grounds? Scarcely.

The declarations of intent from the other finance ministers are equally as vague and informal.

The Japanese Finance Minister, Kiichi Miyazawa, gave assurances that his government would help to strengthen domestic demand with money and fiscal measures.

James Baker, the American Treasury Secretary, promised to throttle back the US budget deficit.

There is nothing new in these assurances from both countries.

The British *Financial Times* commented that it was difficult to be enthusiastic at the results of the Paris meeting. The paper said that the politicians had indulged in rhetoric rather than get down to deeds.

It is not surprising, then, that industry, banks and the stock exchanges regarded the Louvre Agreement with a degree of scepticism.

From what has been made public so far there are few hopes that foreign exchange markets will be any calmer and that a first step has been made to improve the international monetary system, as Balladur maintained.

Perhaps it is not fair to file away the Paris meeting in a bulging drawer for "economic summits generally," and on that account carry on as usual.

Here and there in the newspapers from the seven countries there are more and more subdued pointers that the politicians and central bankers ended up with something more concrete than the text of the communiqué would lead any one to assume.

The West German delegation no longer contests that the ministers came to an understanding on certain important questions and that undisclosed arrangements were made which were not referred to in the communiqué.

It is being said that the politicians and central bankers have agreed on how they will react to certain economic situations.

One participant in the Paris meeting said: "We are prepared, you can be assured, for any eventuality in the economic situation and on foreign currency markets."

Clarity is no longer lacking. No participating country can get out of anything with the argument "misunderstanding," the participant said, adding that this was the real success of the Paris meeting.

But this has not yet been made public. If it is a fact that the meeting resulted in all participating central banks being prepared to grapple with currency markets together in future, when they get unruly, that would indeed be a success. The Americans have until now been reluctant to do this.

If behind everything there is the intention that the concentrated financial power of the seven central banks will be deployed to preserve current exchange rates into the future, then many speculators could get a bloody nose.

Presumably they will not try to speculate against the central banks. Then inevitably calm would return on the currency front.

Perhaps the verbal attacks from American politicians against the "too high dollar exchange rate" will be halted. These resulted in fresh sudden dollar price falls. It is perhaps true that the Americans are in earnest when they say they will reduce their budget deficit.

Perhaps the Japanese and West German finance ministers can be expected

DIE ZEIT

to announce concrete measures to increase domestic demand in their countries at the currency meeting of the Seven in Washington at the beginning of April.

Tidings of this sort would be very welcome, but at the present this is pure speculation.

Because there is no mention in the communiqué of closer cooperation at an economic and monetary policy level between the seven industrialised nations, another conclusion could be reached: The politicians themselves did not believe that the Paris meeting was successful.

Bernard Blohm

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 27 February 1987)

Brazil action on debt reveals a basic truth

Brazil has suspended interest on its foreign debt of 108 billion dollars. The official announcement did not say when it was intended to resume payments.

Brazil's decision could influence repayment policies of other debtor countries.

If the unilateral moratorium lasts more than 90 days the American creditor banks involved must write off their 25 billion dollars in credits as irrecoverable.

If that did happen, some major American banks would go to the wall. But this time, that is not likely to happen. Neither the Washington government nor the central bank system could stand idly by and let such a collapse happen.

The World Bank would not allow this to happen for fear that the situation would be worsened.

The Brazilian refusal to pay is the most serious signal so far that the days of the present crisis management are numbered.

It operates on the principle of providing fresh credits so that interest payments can be made.

Until now it has been possible to delay the moment of truth, but the debts have grown larger all the time, so that now worldwide they total more than a thousand billion dollars.

It goes without saying that such a policy must come to a natural end. The debtor coutries would eventually find it impossible to meet their ever-increasing debt burden.

This has happened in Brazil's case. If the country were to meet its interest and capital repayment commitments this year it would have to remit 23 billion dollars to foreign banks. Brazil had an export surplus last year of almost ten billion dollars. It is already obvious that this year the yields from foreign trade will not be so great.

Under these conditions Brazil had no alternative but to put on the brakes. The Brazilian government did not want to have all its foreign currency reserves eaten up.

The acclamation with which this course of action has been greeted in Latin America does not forebode well for the future. Most of the major debtor countries are Latin American states.

Argentina has foreign debts totalling 50 billion dollars and there are indications from Buenos Aires that the Argentines will take the same course of action.

Mexico, with almost the same volume of foreign debt, is at present benefiting from the slight increase in oil prices, but no-one knows how oil prices will develop during this year.

These three countries have foreign debt totalling 250 billion dollars. If the Brazilian example should set a precedent, then the international fire brigade must get to the pumps quickly.

This all goes to show hom vital it is to set the whole system on a new basis.

An attempt must be made to examine each individual country's debt burden and interest commitments and bring these commitments into unison.

This would entail considerable sacrifices by the creditor banks but, on balance, they would be less than the endless financing of interest payments.

The crux is that the debtor countries have made allowances for the American credit institutions. For this reason there is now talk in the bank consortia involved of going it alone.

This means that the Americans *can* continue to pursue their rigid *precepts*, while others, among them West German banks, can make separate arrangements as regards interest commitments until accounts are cleared up.

German banks have made good progress in coming to terms with their foreign credits in default. Valuation adjustments have been made for years with the result that today between a quarter and three-quarters of these unfortunate involvements have been written off.

In other words the inability of the major debtor countries to repay would be painful for banks in the Federal Republic but they would no longer be calamitous.

It is quite obvious that no-one expects that these debts will be repaid, but no banker would dare say this in public.

This fact must be faced up to and an agreement reached to give the debtor countries breathing space to develop their economies. The quicker this is done the sooner a thriving basis will be found for international economic cooperation.

Hampered world trade is the worst consequence of the unsolved debt crisis.

Helmut Maier-Mannhart

(Suddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 24 February 1987)

Continued from page 5

economic and political necessities lead to the circulation of deutschmarks in East Germany"; on the other hand, certain manifestations of this phenomenon "blatantly contradict fundamental socialist values".

It is difficult to understand, the study claims, "that under certain circumstances western currency and socialist values are mutually compatible".

For this reason, the author maintains, it is essential that "amoral behaviour in dealings with the deutschmark be criticised on a class-analytical basis". Quite.

The author believes that by satirically poking fun as certain types of behaviour such as "subservience" to the deutschmark the audience is able to view the problem "in class-analytical terms" rather than as a "vague" phenomenon.

"In everyday life," the author adds, this behaviour will then be "rejected as unacceptable and immoral in the broadest sense of the word".

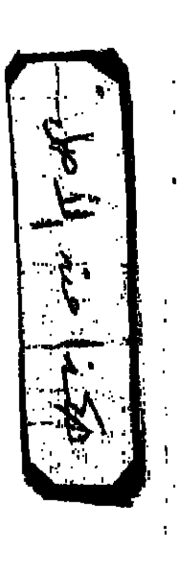
This, however, doesn't help those with no western currency.

Schaller's song suggests that workers without Westmarks have the "real" power in society. Yet the truth is that those with deutchmarks are the kings.

The people the satirists accuse of "amoral behaviour" are unlikely to lose any sleep. On the East German black market a Westmark brings between six and eight Reichsmarks.

Michael Mara

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 12 February 1987)



■ RETAILING

Germany's high-flying supermarket chain — quality lines without frills

No German supermarket chain can match the reputation of Aldi for selling good quality goods cheaply. Suppliers like Aldi as much as the customers. The first Aldi opened in 1962. By 1972 there were 600 branches. Now there are nearly 2,000.

The Aldi supermarket chain, owned by brothers Karl and Theo Albrecht, has reached a turnover of DM17bn a year, which is 13 per cent of the nation's retail grocery market.

It is much more than their nearest rivals, Rewe-Leibbrand OHG, Co-op AG and the Tengelmann Group.

Yet unlike their competitors, Aldi have flourished by opening new stores (they have 1,900) rather than taking over existing ones.

The Albrecht brothers didn't start from scratch. Their mother had a grocery store in Essen.

Theo served his apprenticeship at the family store. Karl, two years older, learnt the trade at a nearby delicatessen.

After the war (Karl was born in 1920, Theo in 1922) the brothers took over their mother's shop but soon found business too cramped and started to expand.

By 1955 they had stores all over the Ruhr. To begin with they were conventional retail grocers. The breakthrough only came when they decided to go discount in a big way.

The first Aldi (short for Albrecht Discount) store opened in Dortmund in 1962. It was based on the simplest of principles: a limited range of fast-selling mass items (currently they stock 550).

Costs were cut by keeping manpower down to a minimum and spending as little as possible on fixtures and fittings.

Low prices were possible as a result, and customers soon began to relish self-service from the cardboard boxes in which goods were delivered. They came in droves.

By 1972 the chain had 600 branches. It now has nearly 2,000 all over the Federal Republic.

The brothers parted company in 1961. Theo now runs the 1,100 Aldi stores in north Germany, Karl the 800 down south. Business is handled by regional companies.

Family foundations hold majority shareholdings in these companies. They are the Theo Albrecht Foundation in Nortorf, near Hanover, and the Karl Albrecht Foundation in Eichenau, Bavaria.

The Aldi success story has been so overwhelming that retail grocery has been hit by an Aldi syndrome.

Aldi prices set standards. All major competitors aim to sell a basic range of goods at prices to match Aldi's.

Yet none of the others seems to have made such an indelible mark on the collective consumer memory as a low-price retailer.

No German company in any sector — and not just in retail grocery — can rival Aldi's reputation for selling quality goods at low prices.

This finding was reached last year in a market survey by the public relations agency Hill & Knowlton for a business magazine.

Aldi was rated so highly for quality in relation to price that the group joined the Top Ten, rivalling blue chips such as Daimler-Benz, Siemens, Nixdorf, IBM, Bosch, Bayer, Volkswagen, BMW and BASF in image.

It is a reputation gained largely by word of mouth. The company executives who were polled are unlikely to be regular Aldi customers themselves.

The millions of consumers who are Aldi regulars have been well conditioned. The Albrecht brothers have succeeded by perseverance in reducing customers' expectations to exactly what they are able and willing to sell.

Aldi regulars know they can't buy dried apricots, horseradish and capers at the store. They don't pester sales staff by asking where the Persil, Asbach, Mon Chéri and other brand-name products are.

They know from experience that Aldi doesn't stock these lines. As for pestering sales staff, they don't even expect sales staff to be around to pester. All they expect is a cashier at the cash register.

Even when queues are long Aldi customers tend to be pleased at the speed with which cashiers work.

They readily accept the need to economise to keep prices down and know and accept the Aldi rule: "Cash only, no cheques." After all, writing cheques wastes time at the cash register.

This patience shown by Aldi regulars is no coincidence. It is a spin-off of the stores' popular low prices and their demonstratively spartan appearance.

Aldi customers really believe the store cuts costs wherever it can and hands on the benefits to its customers in the form of lower prices.

Aldi's reputation with suppliers is no less favourable. The Albrecht brothers are agreed to be strictly honest and above-board.

Suppliers may groan because the slightest deviation from the quality contractually agreed is followed up by Aldi as breach of contract. They also groan because Aldi strikes a hard bargain — to the last decimal.

Handelsblatt
WIRTSCHAFTS- UND FINANZZEITUNG

But Aldi suppliers can be sure of regular orders and, as a rule, countrywide distribution.

Aldi pays on the nail and abides by its terms of contract. No-one is invited to renegotiate terms because, say, raw material prices have plummeted since the contract was signed.

Aldi expects suppliers to abide by their terms too. Prices are agreed to a fraction of a pfennig, but they are genuine prices, with no hidden extras such as contributions toward promotion costs.

Hidden extras of this and other kinds are established practice in retail trading. Aldi can manage without them; it negotiates superb terms in any case.

The combination of bargain buying, sophisticated logistics and keen cost management enables the group both to sell inexpensively and to trade at a profit.

Aldi are reputed, despite discount prices, to run at a much healthier profit than most retailers. The trade mainly runs on a profit margin of less than one per cent.

But no-one knows for sure. Aldi doesn't publish accounts. It doesn't need to. The management's reputation for being saying nothing has long formed part of the corporate image.

The brothers go to great and successful lengths to avoid having to publish accounts. Aldi trades via about 30 separate companies, all (private) GmbH & Co. KGs, and journalists are invariably told, in a friendly telex, that no information is divulged on company affairs "as a matter of principle."

Suppliers and staff who might be in a position to shed more light on Aldi's affairs keep quiet too.

It is in the supplier's interest not to talk about business. A number of brand-name companies supply Aldi with goods indistinguishable from the brand-name products but for "unknown" brand names to conceal their origin.

There are good reasons for this discretion. Manufacturers who sell brand-name goods to Aldi would have trouble selling to other retailers. So Aldi stocks few brand-name items.

Unlike the "Plus" range marketed by the Tengelmann Group the Albrechts have yet to fully respond to the growing consumer preference for brand-name products. It will be interesting to see what happens if and when they do.

Staff also keep quiet. It doesn't like taking them to court in the event of a dispute. If the company no longer wants to employ someone, for whatever reason, generous severance pay is offered — so generous that settlements are out-of-court.

The Albrecht brothers take a dim view of any public discussion about Aldi and its staff. When the trade unions pilloried Aldi's practice, some years ago, of hiring staff by the hour, calling them the "call girls of the retail trade," Aldi promptly abandoned the idea.

The company now prefers to hire part-timers and pay social security rather than rely on casual staff. One advantage is that permanent staff can be kept better to heel, including a pledge to silence.

Aldi is run on what is known as the Harzburg management model — on strictly hierarchical lines.

There are even two categories of store manager. Grade II managers are promoted to Grade I — and higher pay — when their sales figures and other statistics are consistently good.

That, however, is as far as store managers get. There is no further promotion. Regional managers are usually young economics or business studies graduates.

Until a few years ago Aldi didn't hire apprentices either. But when the 1960s baby boom hit a depressed labour market and apprenticeships were in short supply, company policy was changed.

As the country's largest retail trader Aldi could ill afford the impression created by not employing apprentices. But Aldi apprentices were seen as a mixed blessing.

Other retailers and chambers of trade and commerce wondered what apprentices could possibly learn in a store that sold less than 600 articles.

One chamber representative, having

Continued on page 9

Battery maker burns fuse over cut price

STUTTGARTER NACHRICHTEN

A battery manufacturer has swooped on Aldi stores all over north Germany to buy up its own batteries which it thinks are being sold too cheaply.

The battery firm, which had refused to supply Aldi directly, sent out 75 sales representatives each with 5,000 marks and told them to buy as many of the batteries as they could.

Aldi are selling a four pack of 1.5-volt Duracell mignon batteries for DM3.45. Normal retail price is DM7.98. About 300 stores were bought out.

Daimon-Duracell markets 80 per cent of its batteries through specialised retail traders and thinks that this trade would be ruined if others did what Aldi are doing.

A Daimon spokesman, Klaus-Peter Gras, says about 120,000 batteries have been bought from Aldi at a cost of DM100,000.

Aldi is estimated to have about 800,000 Duracell batteries in stock. The discount chain has been interested in batteries for some time and made Daimon-Duracell a bulk purchase offer last autumn.

The company refused to do business, saying it relied on specialised retail outlets. Daimon-Duracell offered to sell batteries to Aldi but under another brand name, but Aldi refused. It wanted the name.

A few days later bulk orders were placed by wholesalers. The supplier suspected, correctly, that orders were being place for Aldi.

Some of Aldi's suppliers were outside Germany. So Daimon-Duracell acted. Its foreign subsidiaries had previously been allowed to sell what they could where they could. They were now brought to heel and sales had to be channelled through Britain.

But this did not take effect immediately. Aldi bought Duracell batteries in bulk in the United States, Holland and Belgium.

Daimon-Duracell got wind of the purchases and decided, after much heart-searching, to move in and protect the specialist trade. Sales representatives were groomed all over the country for the "swoop."

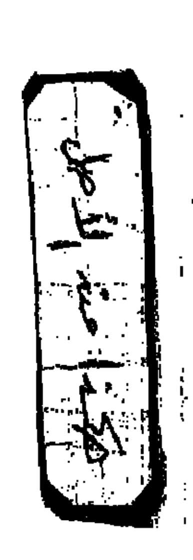
As the batteries are only on sale in north Germany Daimon-Duracell sent in 75 of its 106 sales representatives. Each was given DM5,000 in cash and told to buy up all the Duracell batteries he could at Aldi stores.

Two possibilities were considered. Aldi could sell the batteries either in the original packaging or in a new wrapper. The retail chain would be (and has been) taken to court if new wrappers were used.

In Berlin a court injunction has been granted. Aldi are liable to a fine of up to DM500,000 if they sell the cut-price Duracell batteries.

A. Günther Gromme/vwd

(Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 20 February 1987)



■ INDUSTRY

How an aerospace giant grew out of a mischievous post-war beginning

When Ludwig Bölkow sat down to plan the future of a new firm in 1948, there was one aim in mind: armaments. It didn't matter that the manufacture of arms was forbidden.

Bölkow, 74 and now retired, says: "There was a business opportunity to be taken." And taken it was: Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm is now the largest aviation and aerospace firm in Europe. It employs 38,000 and its turnover last year was 5.7 billion marks.

In 1948, Bölkow saw that the Federal Republic would eventually have its own armed forces.

The arms ban troubled neither Bölkow nor the financiers behind him. He said: "We produced it despite all with private money."

The "it" was a guided anti-tank missile.

Bölkow peddled a prototype of this missile around. He said: "I called on people with a model of the missile made of papier-maché and plastic packed in a suitcase."

He was not able to find a firm that could supply him with components for the missile. "Either they were too expensive, or they wanted to produce in large quantities or they feared they would be hauled up in front of a court-martial."

So Bölkow, in cooperation with a Swiss company, built the anti-tank missile Cobra himself.

The Bonn Defence Ministry was grateful to him for his initiative and on 23 February 1956 handed him his first defence contract for 4,000 Cobras.

Since then more than 150,000 of these missiles have been sold all over the world, including Turkey and Pakistan.

The story of the Cobra, the first success of the organisation that eventually became known as MBB, is more than a tale about the founding years of the Federal Republic and MBB itself.

In it there are the three factors that have contributed so much to MBB's success — creative thinking, a benevolent and financially strong main customer and partners and clients all over the world.

These three criteria have resulted in a concern whose products are in action all over the world, that has employed generations of engineers and that is a symbol of German industry.

An understanding of the road to Ottobrunn calls for an appreciation of the long and mutually beneficial partnership between state defence and the armaments organisation MBB.

Hanns Arnt Vogels, chairman of the board of management, sees nothing wrong in the MBB public image as an "arms organisation."

He said: "We do not have to hide ourselves away because we support the defence responsibilities of the Federal Republic government in an appropriate way."

But it is well-known that defence contracts awarded to MBB by the Bonn govrernment in 1986 accounted for only a half of the organisation's turnover for the year.

In 1985 the defence division, mainly concerned with missiles, showed a turnover of DM1.5bn. To this can be added the tasty morsel of DM1.6bn in aircraft production, mainly the Tornado fighter.

This gives a healthy total turnover of just over DM3bn.

A break-down of the MBB balance-sheet, to discover where the profits came from, reveals that missiles and fighters were in thick black figures, aerospace not quite so good and civil aviation deeply in the red.

Arms contracts are still MBB's main concern with 60 per cent of contracts coming from the public sector and 20 per cent from state-supported contracts (the Airbus).

Why are armaments so expensive? Visit the MBB workshops in Augsburg and examine an X 9570 frame, a 2.2 metre long component made of dull-gray tough aluminium. It is milled from a massive block of aluminium in a green machine the size of a small house. Mountains of shavings fall from the machinery.

At the end of this process there is only four per cent of the aluminium brute remaining, in the form of the X 9570 frame. People have no part in this process.

This frame, along with others, gives the tail of the Tornado its vital stability.

Orders for the Tornado have been placed by the British, Italians and West Germans. In series production every frame must be exactly the same size.

Günter Gans, head of the Augsburg plant, said: "Human hands are too awkward to produce geometrically exact components."

The X 9570 frame is a fairly simple small component of the total tailpiece of the fighter that includes hundreds of parts, no less expensive and difficult to produce.

Günter Gans is proud of his plant that applies computerised integrated automated manufacturing systems.

Three large computers control the whole factory. They programme giant machines with data, making sure that the milled components are collected, they supervise that component repacements are available at the right time and, as a subsidiary operation, they pay out wages and salaries.

Augsburg is only one of many MBB factories, in which the German part of the Tornado, 42.5 per cent, is produced.

There are similar machines, computers and production lines at British Aerospace and Aeritalia.

The result of all these efforts is a plane that cost DM41.89m at the beginning of last year, excluding duties, preliminary costs, spare parts and so on.

The many billions of marks Bonn has invested via MBB in the Tornado over the past 15 years has secured for the German Airforce an expensive but modern fighter.

The plane has given employment to thousands of MBB workers and staff employees as well as hundreds of supplying companies.

This, in fact, is the main problem for the Ottobrunn operation. If the British do not acquire any more export contracts then the last Tornado order will be completed in 1991.

There is not much money to be made at the MBB plant at Manching, involved in the care and maintenance of the fighter.

But neither this nor increased utilisation of the Tornado production line for civilian purposes is a replacement for the work, for the know-how gained and profits earned from a suitable fighter, produced in cooperation with other European countries.

Hopes in Ottobrun have been solidly placed in the Jäger 90, a replacement for the German Airforce's ageing Phantoms.

After various multinational quarrels, and the withdrawal of France from the project, a draft proposal has eventually been drawn up, agreed by the four partners, Britain, Italy, Spain and West Germany.

Vogels' deputy, Sepp Hort, is confident that the Bundestag will approve financing for the development of the project after the summer recess.

This contract is very important for MBB, and before Bundestag approval is given there is to be a general debate about it.

Bundestag members are still just a little shocked at the price for the Tornado. In October last year they approved DM230m for the new jet fighter, emphasising, however, that no definite decision had yet been reached about the Jäger 90.

The Bundestag, acting as a guardian of the best interests of MBB's exclusive client, the Federal Republic, is letting the management board members wriggle just a little, if only as a matter of course.

Because of the concern over price the Defence Ministry in Bonn has proposals which call for modification of an existing plane which could be built under licence, following the idea of "Rather not all that modern, but financially within our reach."

The plane is the F 18 from America's McDonnell Douglas.

What particularly irritates MBB here is that lobbyists in Bonn from their sole real competitor, Dornier in Friedrichshafen, make great play of possible cooperation with MacDonnell Douglas.

In one way or another Dornier will be involved, come what may. The Bonn government wants to see Dornier participating in the Jäger 90.

Sepp Hort complained: "I cannot imagine why previous Bonn governments insisted on mergers in the aviation industry if it was not essential as regards size and performance to go along with international programmes."

Then turning his attention towards Dornier on Lake Constance he said: "If there was a deliberate withdrawal from these mergers, I can understand why now attempts are being made to joy ride with a licence programme."

MBB boss Vogels believes that such a licence programme, "is the beginning of industrial insignificance."

But they are not resigned in Ottobrunn. MBB spokesman Eduard Roth said: "We recognise the nation's problems, analyse them with calculations and solve them with technology."

In the past few years obviously MBB's dependence on the state has become more and more uncomfortable.

A board member said that the effects of working with the military, that always made special demands with "absurd quality controls" but paid for it all, are obvious.

He said: "This word special involves us in employing many development technicians. The end result is very sophisticated but that costs money."

He quoted the example of the order MBB won to provide America's Disneyland with a sophisticated transport system.

One top Ottobrunn manager said that its design and construction was far too sophisticated and over-developed, and it was too expensive for a one-off contract.

Vogels, previously with the Flick organisation, changed over to MBB in 1983. The message was clear to him. He said: "We have to learn how many special contracts we have to pass up, if the work is not for defence or space."

The golden era for MBB engineering in the past twenty years, as so many old hands recall nostalgically, was closely connected with the more or less unlimited funds provided by the state for research and development.

Government contracts, that were frequently handed out to only one firm because of the lack of competition, were calculated on the "reimbursement for prime costs" principle.

The contractor presented to his customer, who had no means of making a comparison, a costing. To these costs an additional charge was made, say of five per cent, for profit. It followed then that the higher the costs the higher the profit.

MBB management no longer clings to its image as a "think factory," financed in this way.

Sepp Hort maintains that public finances handed out to MBB under this system were put to better use than in other organisations. Nevertheless according to Vogels, "in this period, when money and costs simply did not play a role, many idiotic ideas were pursued; a big dipper or a double garage that had a seesaw some place."

What pains Vogels so much is that many of these developments could never find a market, they could never be sold.

To turn this trend on its head Vogels has established two divisions under the heading "diversification." In these divisions MBB developments and abilities are tested for their marketability and profitability in "normal" conditions.

The product range extends from biogas plant via medical lasers to plastic consoles for cars. Certainly not a lot of money will be earned from these deve-

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A business opportunity was there to be taken . . . Ludwig Bölkow.

(Photo: dpa)

SüddeutscheZeitung

■ AVIATION

New system of making wings, fuselages

A German engineer claims to have developed a way of making better aircraft fuselages and wings more cheaply. Rüdiger Vogler says his technique cuts weight and increases payload capacity. The system could also be applied to ship- and coachbuilding.

One reason why competition between aircraft manufacturers is so fierce is that there is little to choose between various models.

No manufacturer has a clear technological advantage. This could change if an idea developed by a small engineering works in Westphalia proves its worth.

Rüdiger Vogler in Borgholzhausen, near Osnabrück, uses a principle based on a tube or cigar shape reminiscent of the Zeppelin, or airship.

It consists of a cylinder-shaped membrane made of fabric clad so that gas cannot escape through it. The tube has semicircular caps at each end.

The caps are mounted on supports and an axle to which a compressor is attached runs through the entire length of the tube.

Tools such as spray and fibre jets on telescopic mountings can be run along the length of the axle. The compressor fills the tube from within, and it inflates like an airship.

Low pressure is enough to bring the outer skin into the prearranged shape. Stable structures over 100 metres long and 30 metres in diameter can be shaped with mathematical exactitude in this way.

Inside this outer supporting structure, and connected with it by struts, there is an inner skin that goes on to become the inner profile of the aircraft fuselage.

The twofold construction is now clad from within in a layer of fast-drying plastic that will be the shell of the finished product.

This firm hollow shell is again plastic clad from within, using the same spray units and compressors. Different atmospheric gases are pumped at different temperatures between layers.

In this way the many layers, all extremely thin, have the exact physical properties required.

The result of what Vogler calls "systematic different pressure-regulated pneumatic shells" is an extremely firm structure consisting of many thin strata.

The technique can, it is claimed, be used to manufacture aircraft fuselages and wing sections. It could also be used in many other industries such as shipbuilding and coachbuilding and to manufacture containers, masts and tunnels.

It is said to have special advantages in aero engineering, where conventional techniques are still reminiscent of classical shipbuilding.

Vogler says aircraft sections don't need heavy and unstreamlined struts and joists. His technique cuts weight and increases payload capacity.

It is also a considerable improvement on impact resistance and other mechanical properties of aircraft units manufactured in the conventional manner.

As a result of the surface not being interrupted by supports of one kind and another there is much less friction resistance due to rivets, joints and seams. Polycarbonate and other fire-resistant compound materials can also be used.

So aircraft fuselages and wing units manufactured in this way are claimed to run much more economically than conventional planes. They weigh less and are more aerodynamic. Passenger safety is better too.

Better aerodynamics and lower weight may, given the resulting lower fuel consumption, increase aircraft range. Vogler's technique might be better suited for building advanced space craft such as the German Sänger and British Hotol projects.

Both are planned, as single-stage vehicles, for use in both the atmosphere and in outer space.

A patent for the technique has just been applied for; it was then unveiled to a small group of specialists and journalists.

In scale-model simulation the new process was successfully tested and found to be feasible.

It now remains to be seen whether the European aviation industry, a successful innovator with the Airbus, will check, consider and maybe use the new technique.

It might well do so, especially as competition between it and US manufacturers is growing steadily more ferocious.

The Americans have openly accused European manufacturers of selling aircraft to US airlines at dumping prices.

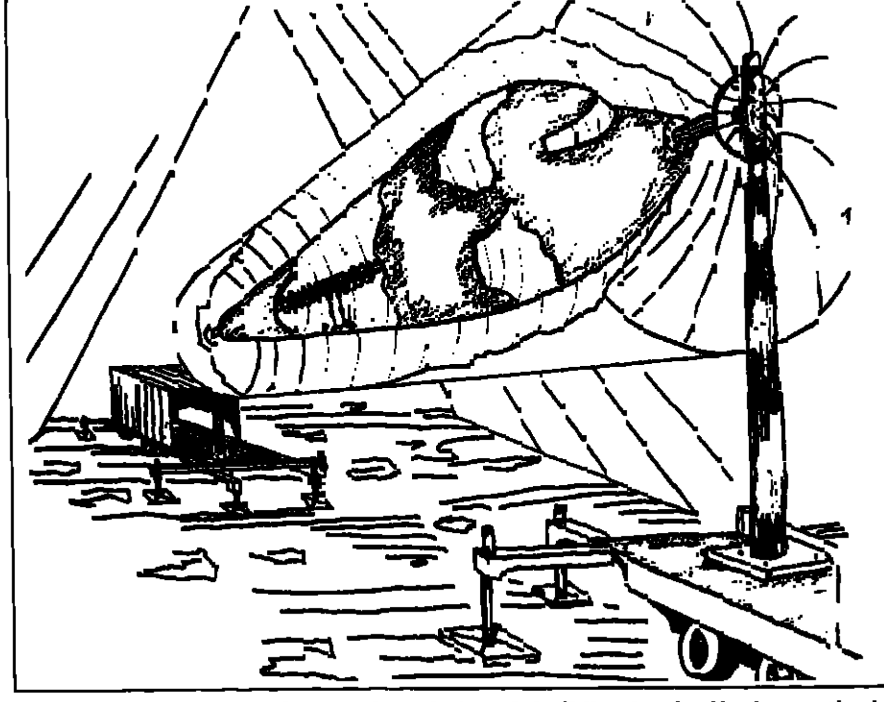
They say the price asked for the planned long-range A 340 Airbus is lower than the cost of research and development. It can only be charged by virtue of government subsidies.

McDonnell Douglas has even accused the Europeans of "rapacious sales practices" unprecedented in the aircraft business.

The Europeans have replied by nothing that the US Defence Department meets 80 per cent of US aviation research and development expenditure.

Anatol Johansen

(Die Welt, Bonn, 19 February 1987)



Stratospheric . . . an impression of aircraft building by the Vogler method.

The rise of Aldi

Continued from page 7

pondered the problem, decided that whichever way you looked at it young people were certainly taught at Aldi how to work!

The company is so quick and unbureaucratic in its response to public criticism that one is bound to feel the Albrecht brothers see their image as highly sensitive.

The principals are clearly keen to uphold their image of being honest, hard-working tradesmen who cut costs wherever possible and hand on savings to their customers.

The reputation for honesty would come under immediate attack if customers were to feel Aldi's austerity was aimed at boosting company profits at the expense of company staff or the company's social responsibilities.

That is why Aldi is very careful to monitor public sentiment on environmental affairs, and so far the company has had very little trouble.

Customers are not unduly worried about Aldi selling nothing but disposal beverage containers. They buy no-return bottles and cans and perhaps salve their consciences by feeling the empties can always be recycled. But times could change.

In 1985 the Federal Economic Affairs and Interior Ministers conferred with Theo Albrecht in connection with refuse disposal legislation. There was talk of retailers being required to stock a certain proportion of returnable containers.

Albrecht said — at the time — that he would hear nothing of the idea, which was said to have been thought up with Aldi in mind. Rather than stock returnable bottles he would stop selling drinks entirely.

When he realised that politicians would then have to go ahead with the legislation and he would be branded as the bogyman (when in reality the entire retail trade was opposed to the proposal), he decided on an elegant alternative.

There has been no change at Aldi outlets but the group has since opened a chain of roughly 30 stores selling nothing but drinks in returnable containers as a gesture of goodwill.

Critics say these shops are a substitute for the public relations department the group head office does without.

But the Albrechts well know where trouble and expense are indispensable.

Marlene Stammnitz

(Handelsblatt, Düsseldorf, 23 February 1987)

■ LITERATURE

The carefree radical who declared war on palaces



Büchner . . . died of typhus.

(Photo: Historia)

Georg Büchner, who died 150 years ago at the age of 23, has had an enormous influence on European literature, although his published works were few.

Büchner, dramatist, student of science and medicine, social revolutionary, is one of the most-performed playwrights in world literature.

He put a "decrepit society" on the stage and linked social condemnation with existentialist profundity.

His aggressive sympathy with "underdogs" has been a signpost for drama from Gerhard Hauptmann onwards.

Büchner's "artistic world view," to quote Nietzsche, inspired writers of the absurd and the grotesque from Franz Wiedekind to Samuel Beckett.

In the revolutionary tragedy *Dantons Tod* he wrote: "The world is chaos. Nothingness is the world god in labour."

When he died of typhus in Zürich in 1837 only a mutilated version of *Dantons Tod* had appeared two years before. The novella *Lenz* appeared two years after his death, and the comedy *Leonce und Lena* only appeared in its entirety in 1850.

His most important work, *Woyzeck*, was only published in 1879 and was performed for the first time in 1913 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the dramatist's birth.

Nevertheless it cannot be said that Büchner was forgotten in the 19th century, for his family and friends were devoted to his memory.

Since the celebrations for the 100th anniversary of his birth there has been a Büchner renaissance, that has continued to this day in the East and the West.

Hungarian critic and philosopher Georg Lukacs made efforts to rescue Büchner as part of the socialist heritage in 1937. The most important West German literary prize is named after Büchner.

Büchner, who was associated with the carefree radicalism of youthful politics, philosophy and natural science, has always been controversial.

A new picture of him was recently presented and Germany's most fervent classicist was hailed as an "early communist" and "anarchistic eroticist."

Büchner was born on 17 October 1913 in the small Hesse village of Goddelau, near Darmstadt. His father was a doctor.

He studied medicine at Strasbourg and Giessen, and attended lectures on philosophy and natural science.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte was his favourite philosopher at this time.

He was prominent in the establishment of a local group in Giessen and Darmstadt that called itself "Society for human rights" and fought actively against the Metternich restoration.

In the summer of 1835 *Dantons Tod* appeared and a warrant was issued for his arrest. Büchner fled to France.

In Zürich Büchner, aged 22, graduated as a doctor of medicine and was appointed outside lecturer in comparative anatomy.

For his degree he wrote a thesis on the nerves in the skull. He planned to write a lecture on the "philosophical systems of the Germans" but nothing came of this project.

He was over-worked and "the whip of hunger," as Max Weber said, drove him to a scientific career. He died of typhus and his grave is on the Zürichberg.

The unmistakeable tone of his writing was set in the political pamphlet *Der hessische Landbote*, written in 1834 with Friedrich Weidrig and including the class-warefare slogan, "Peace to the cottages, war on the palaces."

The "oppressors" had made "the German paradise" into a "wasteland" and a "field of the dead."

But Büchner's belief in the French revolution transplanted to Germany was not blind. He unmasked in *Dantons Tod* those who would spread devastation and death in the name of the revolution. Büchner's answer is compassion for maltreated creation.

This was presented with a twinkle in the eye in the comedy *Leonce und Lena*, but it is still earnestly meant.

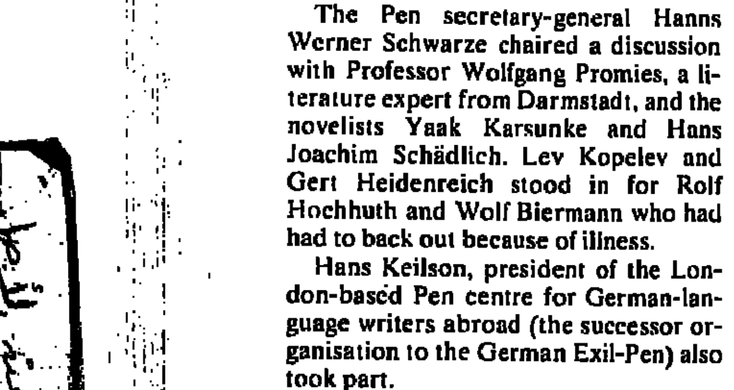
Suffering and happiness are both gifts of history, where pain and boredom prevail, as Büchner's contemporary dramatist Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) had shown.

The novella *Lenz* is also very contemporary. The hero, Reinhold Lenz, "wants to grind the world to bits with his teeth and spit them out in the creator's face."

Büchner's last work, if the lost piece about the Italian satirist Pietro Aretino is excluded, was his masterpiece *Woyzeck*. It is an unordered sequence of unfinished scenes, but it communicates a grotesque, pessimistic power. In Alban Berg's opera of 1920 its intensity becomes almost unbearable.

Wolfgang Schirmacher

(Bremer Nachrichten, 19 February 1987)



Darmstadt offered the West German Pen Club DM30,000 to finance its annual meeting in the city, held there for the first time in many years.

Darmstadt wanted to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the death of Georg Büchner.

More than 120 of the 473 members turned up and there was talk of a "record attendance."

Büchner was born near Darmstadt and the city's celebrations were organised under the slogan "Georg Büchner — his times, our times."

The Pen secretary-general Hanns Werner Schwarze chaired a discussion with Professor Wolfgang Promies, a literature expert from Darmstadt, and the novelists Yaak Karsunke and Hans Joachim Schädlich. Lev Kopelev and Gert Heidenreich stood in for Rolf Hochhuth and Wolf Biermann who had had to back out because of illness.

Hans Keilson, president of the London-based Pen centre for German-language writers abroad (the successor organisation to the German Exil-Pen) also took part.

A discussion was planned but it boiled down to a few short talks and statements, that were very tame.

The theme of Büchner's relevance to our times could have been exciting. A militant youth said during a television discussion: "If there is anything that will help in our times it's violence." Justifying this he asked do we not indeed find ourselves in a permanent state of violence?

Writers meet to remember Georg Büchner

Karsunke quoted this provocative statement. He said: "Stone-throwing young militants can cite a letter that the student Büchner wrote to his parents."

How is this writer and agitator understood today? According to Karsunke there was, on the one hand, the revolutionary Büchner, the socialist, then the resigned Büchner. There was even a Büchner for Maoists. He forgot to mention the Karsunke Büchner.

He brought together in his elegant review of Büchner contemporary references (the situation concerning exiles in this country and the radio-active milk powder that turned up in Bremen port) and suitable quotes from Büchner and so brought the theme of "Brüchner — his times, our times" down to a common denominator.

Karsunke suggested with quotes from Büchner that behind the democratic-constitutional facade social attitudes and attitudes to violence had changed little, despite appearances.

Gert Heidenreich described other aspects his gerneration, the generation of the student movement of the late 1960, had in common with Büchner. He called it "the swift hopes that end in long disappointments."

The Cologne authoress Carola Stern went into the critical question he posed as to whether Büchner really represented our current feeling of being alive.

She warned of the danger of "playing the hypocrit when Büchner is mentioned. We do not have any Büchners today, no reactionaries of the 1848 kind, no hopes of revolution."

Being able to work effectively towards a better future is different from Büchner and the other revolutionaries of his time and later, different to the student movement with its firm ideas of utopia. We lack conviction now, she said.

She saw in this resignation the reasons for the "present plundering of the peace movement."

Wolfgang Promies argued against the view of Büchner resigned and fatalistic.

Hans Joachim Schädlich chaired a discussion on the expression betrayal, a linguistic-poetic tour d'horizon with reference to the Büchner-traitor Klemm.

With reference to the release of Sakarov, Lev Kopelev recalled the power of words, he spoke of the effectiveness of speaking out in public. Proof of the power of words is the fact that we talk of Büchner today, he said.

"I believe in the ultimate victory of words," said Kopelev in a lively discussion for which inadequate time had been allowed.

Eckhard Franke

(Kolner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 21 February 1987)

Grass . . . no more illusions.

(Photo: We

Günter Grass returns from Calcutt

Calcutta is a city which needs its ow James Joyce, John Dos Passos Alfred Döblin, said German auth Günter Grass after visiting the city of million on the banks of the Hooghly r er.

Grass went to Calcutta in August year with his wife, Ute. They inten to stay for a year but left after fiv months.

He says he has no more illusions. He went to see if Gandhi's ideals still influ enced Indian life and found that ther were fewer signs of the non-violent phi losophy than 10 years ago, when he wa last in India.

"Like European ideas these idea have become exhausted. They no sound more like a sermon"

Grass was speaking in New Delhi be fore flying off to Portugal. He had als come to Calcutta so he could stand bac a little from Europe. He was weary entrenched European attitudes

His book *Der Butt*, dealt with his tim in Calcutta on his last visit to India a d ecade ago. The experience had shock him. This time he knew what to expec

This time he had not been trying discover things exciting. For weeks e end he had travelled by tram from hi house on the outskirts into the city. Th had, by necessity, brought him int close contact with the people of the city. He said its had shown him the senseless ness of the caste system.

The trams were little better than rusy cattle trucks, often without seats. Brah mins travelled packed together with Un touchables every morning. "They suff together and sweat together."

Grass spent many hours walki round the city sketching. He said that his first visit to India, he had been ov influenced by the exotic. He had a lowed the grimness of poverty to exe too much influence on his judgment.

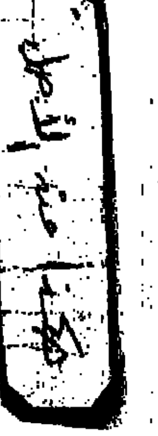
His records of conversations wi people fill many notebooks, but he doe not intend writing a novel about this cit where three million live in slums an 500,000 on the footpaths.

Perhaps I'll write an essay, he said. I would be better if Calcutta discovere its own James Joyce, John Dos Pass or Alfred Döblin.

But why had Grass chosen Calcutta again, a city that seems to be rapidly de caying?

He answered: Calcutta fascinated and excited me at one and the sam time. Its problems are not the problem

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■ BALLET

No sleep, peccadilloes with the drum major, and a cut throat

German ballet is concentrating on two aspects this season. At the beginning classical ballet prevailed, but now there is more modern dance with some impressive productions.

This year the choreographers' favourite is *Swan Lake*, for many people synonymous with ballet itself. It is a challenge for any company. Even non-balletomanes can see just how good the company is that takes on this work.

There have been three productions this season, in Basle, Bonn and Dortmund, with the last of these being by far and away the best.

Youri Vamos, ballet director from Munich, has built up a young, enthusiastic group of dancers in Dortmund, and he has got the services of Joyce Cuoco, a prima ballerina of international repute.

In his interpretation of the ballet Vamos has a balance between the traditional and up-to-date. He develops the homo-erotic psychological make-up of the Princess showing that she had too intense a relationship with her widowed mother.

Great things were expected of Heinz Spoerli's production in Basle, but in the event his approach to *Swan Lake* was disappointing. There was no convincing concept behind the production. Dances followed each other in any old way.

The worst of the three productions was Peter van Dyck's in Bonn. There was here a total lack of interpretation. He reproduced almost step for step an ancient Paris production.

Munich has two theatres, the Nationaltheater and the Theater am Gärtnerplatz that have large ballet companies. But size does not guarantee artistic success.

For years there has been an embarrassing chaos in ballet at the Bavarian State Opera. The latest full-length ballet by Norbert Vesak, a version of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, is a fearful dance farce. Guest star from Stuttgart Richard Cragun gives the production some exciting moments but that's all.

Things are not much better at the competitor Theater am Gärtnerplatz. Günter Pick staged the fairytale ballets *The lady and the unicorn* and *Beauty and the beast*. Both were very superficial, rarely providing exciting moments of dancing.

Pick's former student Bernd Schindowski did not fare much better in Gelsenkirchen with Russian ballet. It was not a bad idea setting both *Le Chout*, music by Sergey Prokofiev, and Igor Stravinsky's *Petrushka* in a Ruhr setting which compensated to some extent for washed-out choreography.

Nor were things much better in Wiesbaden were ballet director Gabriel Sala entrusted a three-ballet evening to his friend Oscar Araiz from Geneva. Araiz paid homage to the superficial taste of the 1960s and produced abstract, modern bits and pieces, one after another, without any dramatic tension. In *Gefährliche Begegnungen* Joel Schnee in Osnabrück produced an intelligent collage of movement using surrealistic motives drawn from the painter Max Ernst. Schnee created brand-new, psychologically convincing modern dance. Heidrun Schwaarz directs the ballet in Essen. She produced a clever and balletically noble *Giselle*. Without any flourishes she developed the story of the betrayed maiden Giselle, who succumbs to her passion for the dance and has to atone to the Wilis for it. (The word comes from the Slovene "vila" meaning vampire. The wilis are the spirits of maidens who die before their intended marriages.)

Guest stars Eva Evdokimova and Lubomir Kafka were brilliant in the leading roles. Women also head the ballet in Bremen, actress Rotraut de Neve and dancer Heidrun Vielhauer. They have had to create a completely new ensemble after Reinhild Hoffmann's departure to Bochum. They are going ahead with this spendidly.

An avant-garde modern dance manifesto, *Gezeiten*, against male domination and environmental pollution, was structured in a typically feminine manner, without melancholy, open, clear and bubbling with wit.

Cologne's Dance Forum produced two evenings of ballet, different in themes, but both stimulating. The Forum began with an anti-war trilogy. Then shortly afterwards there was Delibes' *Coppélia*, a late romantic ballet that really did not suit the modern concept of this ensemble. Jochen Ulrich made the ballet vivid with a psychological interpretation from the original story by E.T.A Hoffmann, delighting the audience but at the same time making people reflect. For the first première of the season at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin Hungarian Laszlo Seregi choreographed his old version of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. By spending a lot of money and producing overwhelming sets he concealed that he had no balletic or dramatic idea of what the piece was about.

Turning things on their head in *Mörder Woyzeck*.

(Photo: Manfred Zentsch)

For the 150th anniversary of the death of Georg Büchner the City Theatre in Heidelberg gave a premier of *Mörder Woyzeck*. Johann Kresnik interpreted this fragmentary drama psychologically. His Woyzeck is an upright man with anal erotic fixations following Freud. So he is excessively orderly, sexually incompetent and compulsively jealous.

His Marie loves the pleasurable side of life and is unfaithful with the drum-major.

That goes against Woyzeck's principles. While tenderly embracing her he cuts her throat, not out of hate but out of love and a neurotic sense of justice.

The music for this production was composed by Walter Haupt, simple, catchy, mainly for the accordion.

There is pleasant news to report from Frankfurt as well. William Forsythe has built up an internationally respected company with excellent soloists. His choreography is praised the world over.

His latest ballet, *New Sleep*, was produced firstly in San Francisco then three weeks later in Frankfurt.

This ballet, together with his previous production, *Big White Baby Dog*, to music by Tom Willems, establishes a trend.

After initial, reflective ballets for intellectuals Forsythe is now being more relaxed, meaningful and cheerful. The art of dance should create laughter and so attract wider audiences.

No-one sleeps in *New Sleep*. The title is ironic. In this ballet there are contrasts and the audience sees wild, vivacious dancing, and learns that everything had in this world is only possible if people are lethargic and do not revolt against evil.

On balance the outlook in German ballet at the moment is promising. The ballet scene is broad, stylistically varied and vivid, offering balletomanes a wide choice from classical to modern ballet.

Roland Langer

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 22 February 1987)

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of a region, but universal." During his stay he was fascinated by comparisons. He discovered parallels with Berlin. Calcutta also "has the stigma of being divided." It is the victim of the division of Bengal in 1947.

"I like Calcutta. I have a relationship with the city," he said.

No-one knows why he is leaving India earlier than planned. Calcutta cannot be blamed for its misery. More likely government officials are to blame. Grass had only harsh things to say about them.

He said Rajiv Gandhi's attempts to haul mediaeval India into the technological 21st century "would not succeed." He regards the attempt as catastrophic, because it would "only create a new techno-feudal class."

During his stay in Calcutta Grass avoided appearing in public. He kept German journalists at arm's length and met Indian journalists only occasionally.

But Calcutta's intellectuals knew all about their German guest, although he had to defend himself vehemently against the cliché that he was an "apocalyptic writer."

Christian Fürst

(Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 13 February 1987)

■ MEDICINE

Help for others from multiple sclerosis victim

Frankfurter Allgemeine

Jens Uwe Stephan is 56 years old. For 25 years he has been confined to a wheelchair. He has multiple sclerosis and is paralysed.

Stephan has been in and out of hospital for years — 30 times. Often for weeks or months.

But he hasn't given in. Despite his disability, he is even managing to help others. He uses both his journalistic skills and his experience of being ill to write pamphlets, magazine articles and a book. A recent example is a pamphlet on self-help for multiple-sclerosis sufferers which has been issued by the Lower Saxony Ministry for Social Services.

Five years ago, another pamphlet by Stephan called "Living with a disease" was published for the health authorities in Hanover. It won him a prize, awarded by the Lower Saxon General Medical Council.

In 1985, Stephan's book, "Ways to treat the seriously ill. Opinions of nurses, patients and relatives," was published. It is a selection of extracts from observations and conversations compiled during his stays in hospitals. (*Wege zur Behandlung von Schwerkranken. Meinungen von Pflegekräften, Patienten und Angehörigen*, vfm Verlag für Medizin Dr. Ewald Fischer, Heidelberg).

In it Stephan describes his experiences without bitterness or resignation. He wanted to help the patients but also to help the nurses to see events from the point of view of the patient.

He now publishes his views in medical magazines describing many positive, few negative, experiences with nursing staff and conscientious objectors doing hospital work as a civilian alternative to military service.

It was a long journey through a tortuous valley before he could take an active part in literary or public debates.

At the beginning of the 1960s he was an economics journalist for a newsagency in Hanover. He comes from a Berlin journalistic family and his only ambition was to write.

All of a sudden he started to feel dazed, became slow and clumsy until finally he ended up having to use a walking stick.

Stephan said, "in the beginning one refuses to believe there is anything seriously wrong," Even the doctors were not sure at first.

He used to say to people that he was suffering from the after-effects of shock from a highway car accident.

It later turned out to be multiple sclerosis. The disease with a thousand faces. Nobody can say for sure what exactly causes the it. The disease is a hardening of the nerves in the brain or spinal chord.

Part or complete paralysis or muscle tremors are associated with it. The cause of it has remained a medical mystery. There are around 100,000 sufferers in West Germany. There is known cure for it. At best one can hope to stop it progressing for a certain time.

The newsagency could not use an immobile journalist who was regularly ill. In 1965 after nearly 10 years, he was sacked. Fellow journalists say he would have got a much better golden handshake if he had been kept on for another three months to complete his 10 years.

He had just taken out a mortage on a house and his wife was expecting a baby when the crunch came. So he was out on the street sick and with no means of support.

Stephan spent 15 of the last 20 years suffering from excruciating neuralgia of the facial cranial nerves —nerves arising from the lower surface of the brain— and had to take pain killing injections. He had over 700 hundred injections into the nerves. The medicine had its benefits but was not without side-effects. He often suffered from hallucinations and later had to cope with withdrawal symptoms.

Uwe Stephan slid into depression. His wife stood by him. He said: "Not every partner can stick it. About 70 per cent of patients are left alone, most of them women."

His wife gave up her job to help him. This enabled him to work for three years as a correspondent for a regional newspaper. She acted as chauffeur, wrote texts and eventually went on herself to become a free-lance journalist.

At the end of the sixties Uwe Stephan had became a forgotten man. The journalist association remembered him at Christmas and some friends called by to see him. But that became less frequent.

Those who remembered that he had ever existed passed their greetings on through the wife.

In 1981 Uwe Stephan took the initiative and reported back with the advice brochures for MS sufferers.

When a specialist succeeded in apparently stopping the pain of the cranial nerves with the aid of a new procedure, he was able to take up work again.

He has been able to concentrate for three years without permanent pain or having to use pain-killing injections.

To say simply that he works as a journalist makes it sound easier than it is. It takes feats of extraordinary will power to overcome his disabilities and type out a text.

Uwe recommends letting the patient getting as far as he can under his own

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Prolonged use of hashish 'a serious threat to health'

Süddeutsche Zeitung

Many still people think that hashish, the hippy drug, is harmless. They are wrong. Regular use over years can seriously damage the health.

A report shows that prolonged use can cause feelings of isolation, chronic feelings of indifference and other psychological problems.

Hashish comes from the resin of the female plant *Cannabissativa var. indica*. Its leaves contain the narcotic marijuana.

There is not enough awareness of its toxicity, nor are there social rules which restrain unbridled consumption as in the case of alcohol.

This has intensified the problem as recent studies of the problem at the University Clinic of Erlangen-Nuremberg confirms.

They researched the effects of 53 heavy smokers of the drug. Most of them have smoked at least a gramm a day for at least two years. A fifth of them have been at it more than 12 years.

Krista Stosberg and Harald J. Losch concluded that the drug can cause serious damage.

More than 80 per cent of those studied came from problem families. The father or mother was often managing alone. The family often had a drug dependent user or a member on the brink of suicide. A fifth of the participants had tried to kill themselves.

Such family circumstances and resulting developmental problems are one cause of drug abuse.

Contact with the drug started in most cases between 13 and 17. They experienced a host of pleasant feelings ranging from happiness to relaxation and peacefullness.

But when interviewed they admitted to the drug's negative effects. Three quarters of them spoke of occasional circulatory problems and vomiting.

Other effects were changes in perception of time and body accompanied by the distorting of space and colour.

Problems often followed after the high had worn off. The user becomes listless and tired and finds himself wanting to take the drug again.

Eberhard Lungershausen, the clinic director, looks upon such symptoms as signs of addiction. And Krista Stosberg thinks that "consumption of hashish cannot be part of everyday life because it destroys social order."

One can see this in the educational opportunities of smokers. Despite their being of normal or above average intelligence none had a university degree, few managed to get a secondary leaving certificate.

Admittedly all were *employed* but not in jobs corresponding to their abilities. Most knew the drug was *detrimental* to motivation.

Three quarters of them felt that it damaged performance at work. More than half suffered regularly from motivation and performance problems.

These tendencies were intensified in a sub-culture which took the use of the drug for granted.

About 90 per cent of users said that some of their friends and wives used the drug.

Stosberg calls this a social vortex. "The effect of the drug, she said, "could best be seen in the area of socialisation."

Even in leisure time the drug seemed to be the only interest.

Nearly a half he participants *had had* an accident at some time. Recent consumption of hashish was not the only explanation. After years of use the drug takes years to be broken down by the body and therefore exercises a continuous influence.

Dieter Schwab

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 12 February 1987)

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lopments, but "that is the direction we must go to meet competition," said Vogels.

This change in management thinking was obviously accelerated by the Bonn government's determined intention of limiting the number of contracts offered on the reimbursement of primary costs principle to as few as possible.

The chances of the MBB production range drawing level with the products available from competing firms are limited.

Furthermore there has now emerged in economic development and German industrial policy two sources (MBB and Dornier) for aircraft and missile production with the accent on MBB.

In Ottobrunn people like to say that "joint European technology" in the aviation and defence industries is a reality. Eighty per cent of MBB's turnover comes from multinational programmes. But no-one is prepared to talk about what significance defence exports have.

MBB's arms exports are again hitting the headlines. The Argentinians shot down British planes with MBB Roland missiles and in the Gulf War the Iraqis use these missiles against Iranian jets.

The list of missile customers extends from Egypt (the Milan) to Senegal (Milan) to Chile (Mamba and Roland) and Syria (Milan.)

MBB, like any other West German firm, is governed by the country's relatively restrictive export legislation. In this country the view prevails that arms are not like any other products.

The German arms industry looks enviously towards France, for instance, where almost any state can buy items that shoot, fly or destroy, like shopping in a cash-and-carry.

MBB has done more than just look towards France. Joint firms have been set up, mainly with the state-owned Aerospatiale.

The most active of these is Euromission, registered according to French company law. Aerospatiale and MBB each have a 50 per cent interest in this subsidiary, which will make a contribution to ensuring that all Nato countries have the same weapons systems.

But Euromissile does not just supply the German and French armies with the Milan, Roland and HOT missiles. The firm supplies clients all over the world from France, untroubled by German arms exports legislation.

This provides MBB with sizeable profits, Bonn is reimbursed with funds provided for development, the Bonn Defence Ministry gets relatively cheap missiles (a Milan missile costs about DM16,700) and West German auxiliary industries earn profits.

Hanns Arndt Vogels does not find this in the least immoral. His voice gets sharp if he is then asked what he has to say to the accusation that MBB serves not only the cause of deterrence but also of real war, such as the Gulf War for instance.

He said: "We abide by the laws as they are at present. The joint companies have been approved by state agreements."

He said that he was in no way worried "if in the course of participating in such companies arms were exported and we are called on to provide our workshare."

He pointed out that there had been no complaints from government. "No-one can be more respectable and proper than us," he said.

Axel Hacke and Kurt Kister

(Suddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 21 February 1987)

■ CAREERS

Engineering remains a man's world — study tries to find out why

Frankfurter Rundschau

Engineering both as a trade and a profession is still a man's world in this country: there are half a million men engineers but only 14,000 women.

The 80,000-strong Association of German Engineers (VDI) has a mere 400 women members.

Only one engineering student in 10 is female, and the percentage is even smaller when peripheral courses such as architecture or informatics are discounted.

The proportion of women students of mechanical and electrical engineering is a paltry two per cent.

The figures are surprising, considering the demand for engineering graduates.

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation, in conjunction with the Technical University, in Berlin, has run a meeting to look at the topic.

The starting point was the findings of a two-year survey of work conditions of women engineers. It was carried out by women sociologists for the Bonn Education Ministry.

Doris Janshen and Hedwig Rudolph interviewed 100 women students at the mechanical and electrical engineering departments of Berlin and Aachen Technical Universities.

They also interviewed working women engineers in Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg.

Many said they got on "fairly well" with the overwhelming majority of male students at university, but there were also "many painful experiences."

Social difficulties encountered mainly at the beginning of university courses were mainly to blame, Janshen and Rudolph found, for poor initial performance by women students who had previously been above-average scholars.

But they regained an even keel by the time they took their preliminary diploma exams and usually graduated with good or very good grades.

Fewer problems than anticipated were encountered by women graduates on starting work. They took longer to find their first job but then worked in the "white heat" rather than on the outskirts of technology.

Women engineers are, however, mainly hired by large firms and research facilities, whereas small and medium-sized firms are evidently more traditional in outlook.

A look at the "jobs vacant" advertisements in the newspaper is enough to show how prevalent prejudice and thoughtlessness still are.

Vacancies are seldom advertised for an "engineer/male or female" (using the appropriate gender in German). Advertisements that bear equal opportunities in mind in the wording of their copy are usually placed by government, local authority or public service employers.

Large firms such as Daimler-Benz and Bosch admittedly also mention that both male and female applicants will be considered. There are even firms where special care is taken to encourage women.

Christa Lippmann of Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm told the Berlin conference that 40 per cent of technical apprenticeships and traineeships were to be reserved for women.

This provision had been made by an all-male works council, was due to be met by 1989 and had in fact already been fulfilled.

In job grades for graduates the company planned to hire a percentage of women in keeping with the percentage of women graduates (in relation to men).

Only 3.5 per cent of graduate staff at Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm are women at present, and they include economics graduates. Only five of the company's senior executive grades are women.

At Daimler-Benz women make up less than one per cent of management grades, said Christine von Urach, as an engineer, supervisory board member and company executive is virtually in a class by herself, and not just at Daimler-Benz.

As a representative of the professional organisation, the VDI, she admitted that the association still had ground to make good before even it could claim to do women engineers justice.

The Association of Women Engineers recently founded in Darmstadt could prove a usually pressure group alongside the VDI.

In economic terms, Frau von Urach said, the country could simply not afford to dispense with the engineering potential women graduates represented.

But how are girls to be motivated to study technical subjects? A wide range of suggestions were made at the Berlin conference. Representatives from various countries were agreed that encouragement must begin early and in the family.

Women interviewed were found for the most part to come from father-centred families in which the girls were able from an early age to model themselves on their father.

Children's toys can be selected with a view to breaking the bounds of typical female behaviour patterns.

Daughters ought, Janshen and Rudolph are convinced, to be treated in exactly the same way as sons in terms of motivation and performance.

They called on the Education, Research and Family Affairs Ministries in Bonn to aim publicity campaigns both at families and at schools and kindergartens.

Kindergarten teachers must be trained to think in terms of equal opportunities and technical trades for girls. Toy manufacturers and children's book publishers were called on to avoid sex stereotypes.

Even moderately good girls must be encouraged at school — in maths and physics lessons — to consider studying engineering.

Textbooks and teaching aids, evidently a blot in the copybook, definitely need to be rewritten.

Psychologist Lore Hoffmann, referring to Kiel University interviews of schoolchildren, noted that scientific subjects which most interest both girls and boys are often not taught at all or, if they are, then only in final years at school.

Contrary to established prejudice, girls were interested in physics experiments but frequently had little or no experience of experimenting or using tools, which was considered a prerequisite.

Frau Hoffmann said technology ought to be taught at primary school. This had proved most successful in Sweden.

Boys are by no means alone in feeling physics and technology are for men. Many teachers agreed.

All women associated with academic research in this sector agreed in Berlin that boys and, in particular, teachers must be required to develop a new outlook.

A student teacher who had just finished practical training at school said she was shocked at the way girls responded to physics lessons.

"I simply haven't been taught how to teach girls," she sadly concluded.

Views differed as to whether classes for girls only ought to be reintroduced in scientific subjects. The experts were, however, agreed that teaching materials and curriculums needed changing.

The Technical University in Berlin is to launch summer schools next year, its president, Manfred Fricke, told the conference.

Schoolgirls were to be briefed on technological studies and confer with women engineering graduates as examples of what they might accomplish.

Herr Fricke took up Frau Janshen's idea of setting up a cooperative network with industry in order to help women students find traineeships and, later, jobs.

Assistant lecturers of both sexes are to be appointed as advisers to women students at departments of the Technical University.

But the main aim is to promote women engineers in executive grades as models to be emulated by successor generations.

The universities themselves cannot exactly claim to have a very good track record in this respect.

Suse Weidenbach

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 19 February 1987)

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steam. This builds up his independence. On the other hand this independence should be given a sense of purpose. The sufferer should not give up. He should not hide his disability or moan all the time about it. He must also have understanding for those who may not be so badly afflicted as himself but who also have problems.

In the introduction of his recently published advice brochure, Dr Heidi Adele Albrecht of Lower Saxony wrote, "You must regain control of your life even if a cruel destiny has knocked it from your hand."

By showing people the benfits of self-help and of encounter groups for young and old alike the author is helping people to do just that. Lower Saxony now has 57 such groups.

Klaus Wiborg

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 23 February 1987)

■ FRONTIERS

Centre provides therapy for torture victims: 500 helped in one year

Last year 500 people, 40 showing signs of having been badly tortured, visited a refugee aid centre in Cologne.

They came from Afghanistan, Iran, Laos, Burkina Faso, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Turkey, Vietnam and Zaire. Amnesty international claims torture is used in 80 to 90 countries.

The Cologne centre, run jointly by the United Nations Commission for Refugees and the Catholic charity organisation, Caritas, treats the mental scars left by torture.

Harmless-looking games form part of this therapy. Osman, a Turk, tried to explain to a German women how his mother used a shawl round her head to carry him and his brothers and sisters as children as she was planting tobacco in the fields.

Tapsoba from Burkina Faso, formerly Upper Volta, came to life when he played imaginary drums in time with music from a cassette. His supple hands got going in a way the others could not follow. No-one would have thought it was the same, tall, inhibited man.

Behind the games is a deadly earnestness. Those who take part in the dance therapy laugh for a while and the jollity of the women group leader is infectious but these signs of pleasure only break through their sadness and depression for a short time.

Taking part in situations such as these helps the refugees at the centre to find a way round never-to-be-forgotten experiences into a normal life that is still full of a sense of loss and deprivation.

Most of those who make their way to the Cologne centre would never be able to get over what they have been through without others' help. Somewhere in the world they have been though the most brutal and cruel torture.

The centre in Cologne offers security. The help it offers brings them back from the precipice of their nightmares and frightful memories.

Hassan from Afghanistan, for instance, 30 years of age, who, with his wife, has been through a series of therapy consultations for months on end to rid him of the cruel anxiety and cramp every night.

He fled Afghanistan four years ago and came to West Germany via Pakistan. He was suspected of belonging to the Afghan insurgents.

He was arrested and badly treated. His hands were crushed together, he was tortured by electro-shocks, kicked in the side by soldiers wearing military boots so that he still suffers from signs of paralysis.

Hassan was idealised by his wife Mina, 10 years his junior. Like Hassan she also comes from an intellectual family background. They were married in West Germany.

Soon after her marriage she realised that she was living with a broken man. Hassan sometimes crouched silently for hours on end in a corner.

There were nights when he screamed in his sleep.

Brigitte Brand, a psychologist and head of the centre, said: "All the anxieties that he did not feel when he was being tortured, come to the surface now when he is safe." This she said was a typical after effect of torture.

Frankfurter Rundschau

Hassan also regularly had difficulty concentrating, which is a frequent symptom in people who have been ill-treated with electro-shocks.

Frau Brand said: "Either the electro-shocks caused brain damage or these people have given so much mental energy to overcoming the trauma of the torture they have no time for anything else."

For the past six months Hassan has not called out at night. He has given up ideas of studying further. Mina and he have come to terms with the realisation that he will not become a university professor.

Frau Brand said that this had been a painful recognition of what is possible, achieved with her help.

He is at present learning a trade. As an acknowledged political exile he has no trouble getting a work permit.

During her work at the centre Frau Brand has acquired a good overall view of what goes on in various countries.

She sees Turkey, for instance, in quite a different light to official statements that maintain that torture is not condoned in the country.

She said: "I don't get that impression, because I have seen so many people with wounds and symptoms, that pointed to only one thing."

She can hardly bring herself to talk about the torturing of people in Afghanistan. She said: "It is gruesome. I have a client from Afghanistan who had had his figure nails pulled out."

She has learned from Iranians that people there who are tortured are eventually executed.

The people who come to the centre in Cologne were in their home countries mainly intellectuals, journalists and trades union officials, and are generally between 20 and 35. A third are women. There are some young people, almost children.

Frau Brand explained: "Most of the people who come to this centre are politically-minded so it is important that the psychologist who treats them can follow what they say."

One of the basics for the people who work at the centre is that they must have had something to do with the problems refugees have to face. Work with Amnesty International, for instance, or practical experience in a Third World country, is helpful.

People who have been tortured often display marked fear reactions and quickly get excited, which they can only overcome by being aggressive.

They suffer from anxieties, many start in fear at the sight of a policeman. They have a fear of noise and think they are back in their prison cell when a neighbour is just knocking a nail into the wall. It reminds them of their torture.

"I avoid running my hands through my hair when I'm thinking. As soon as I raise my hand I notice that these people start up and look at me with anxiety," Brigitte Brand said.

She is 34 and petite, with a youthful appearance, which certainly does not look intimidating.

But the victims of torture can react with reserve and even mistrust at a display of friendliness.

A young Turkish girl had been blindfolded and sexually abused. During the ordeal she repeatedly heard a man's voice saying: "What are you doing here? Let her go." The voice then said in an effort to cheer her up: "Come on, tell us what we want to know. You can see what is going to happen to you."

She was unable to establish if there were two men or one man using two voices, one tormenting, the other friendly.

The experience has left her with an ambivalent attitude towards people who are friendly to her. In other words, her friend could also be her enemy.

Her husband died under torture. She now lives alone in Bonn. At a certain point she discontinued her therapy, because she could not carry on any longer.

"But she will come back," Frau Brand said, "because the therapy is her only chance to come to terms with her experiences."

Christin, a 16 year-old Ethiopian girl, has been able to overcome her experiences.

She was arrested just because she was a member of the Mykene Jesus sect. For days she had to survive in a cell dripping with water. She was sexually abused but eventually managed to get away. She now lives alone and feels abandoned.

The people work at the centre have become surrogate parents in a way for her.

After her therapy she had learned at least that she could not efface from her life the torture she had experienced. She could not run away from it.

Soldiers in Lebanon poured petrol over a family man in the street and set him alight. He was able to survive this but a little later his two children were killed by a bomb. The rest of the family fled to West Germany via East Berlin.

They were not given asylum because people fleeing civil wars are not recognised as political refugees.

This man trembled with anxiety of fear of being repatriated.

What has happened to one member of a family has its effects on all the others, Brigitte Brand said: "The victim is not the only one who suffers. Children, even grandchildren, can be affected. This means we have to do something so that in the future not too many people suffer from what was done to their parents."

Many parents try to spare their children from the knowledge of the horrors they have experienced, which creates barriers between parents and children.

Nothing is said in the family circle about what happened, but the children get to know about what happened when their father screams out at night and their mother is depressed.

They become anxious and do not know how to handle this situation, but they know that their parents are troubled.

"They try to bring some stability to their parents and put aside their own anxieties and problems. They become extremely sweet and properly behaved children.

Then they show the same symptoms as their parents. They cannot sleep properly. They have nightmares and psychological problems.

In family group therapy the family cautiously discusses what happened to the parents, which breaks down the barriers of silence and foreboding.

How do the staff of the Cologne centre deal with the problems that are placed before them day after day?

Frau Brand answered "We can do something be giving a sense of security and by being able to do something in the most difficult crises. By giving hope that the people still have a chance in life."

She said that she hoped that the patients who came to her and her colleagues in the centre could see from their example "that life was still worth living. That we are not a lot of wet blankets."

What does all this talking achieve, all these hours of consultation if, when a young Tamil is eventually helped to get over his epiletic fits, he has to be sent back to Sri Lanka?

Frau Brand said that he would not survive that. Neither would the Lebanese man survive being repatriated even after his nervous condition had been cured.

Before that happened he has threatened to kill his family. And who could dissuade him after all he has suffered?

Ingrid Müller-Münch

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 20 February 1987)




Therapy for torture victims . . . invisible scars. (Photo: Schreiber)

■ HORIZONS

Town-twinning seen as a way of helping development in the Third World

Special relationships between towns or cities, often known as "twinning", were common after the First World War. After the Second World War, there was a regular boom in town twinning because of the need to try and reconcile and understand.

There was hardly a centre of any size that did not have at least one — many had more — twinning arrangement in Europe, the United States or Japan.

The idea seems now to have lost much of its attraction in these days of mass tourism. Many partnerships have become mere paper relationships. The people know just as little about each other as before.

But towards the end of the 1970s, the thrust of the concept began to change. People began to look to the underdeveloped countries. The rich of Europe should help the poor of the Third World.

In Britain, in France, in Belgium, in Holland, in Denmark and in Germany, movements began which crossed into fields that had been almost entirely the domain of the State of the churches.

Small centres began to figure particularly prominently: Rheda-Wiedenbrück raised about 25,000 marks and helped build a school in Aouda, in Togo; and in conjunction with the Dutch town of Oldenzaal, it supported a project to train young tradesmen in Biriwa, in Ghana.

The bishopric of Münster has developed contact with the bishoprics of Wa, Tamale and Navrongo-Bolgatanga in Ghana. Communities and citizens' initiatives support the building of clinics and homes for the disabled in Brazil, Bolivia, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

German and French towns that have already been twinned enter joint projects in the Third World.

The centre of Lahnstein, for example, which is twinned with Ouahigouya in Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), has been for longer a twin of Vence, in France. Lahnstein and Vence are helping to build a school and a small church; send medicines and spectacles; and have provided X-ray apparatus, millet mills and many other items to various parts of Africa.

Many communities restrict their aid to one town or area. In Bremen, the op-

DER TAGESSPIEGEL

posite is true. The city itself is promoting cooperative ventures involving diverse groups.

The city is the contact point for all parties, regardless if they want to helpin Poona, in India, or Corinto, in Nicaragua. One university is providing schoolbooks for country areas of South Africa.

The first division Bremen soccer club, Werder Bremen, is collecting agricultural implements for Zambia. The city's Senator for Health is trying to arrange and exchange of doctors between Bremen and Gambia.

Twinning tends to work badly where a single person or one group are the sole participants. Often, few exchanges take place.

The mayors sign documents with great flourishes, shake hands with broad smiles and beam at the camera of the local photographer. But then a change of council or government can end it all at a stroke. There are problems with language and the cost of air tickets to be overcome. Deep-rooted attitudes towards the poor of the world have to be overcome. Because basically, the belief still is that consciences can be bought off simply by giving; but that is not partnership. Partnership is a more balanced relationship.

Wolfgang Blüm is the head of Lahnstein's twin-town committee. He says it takes at least 10 years for partnerships to get established.

He has stopped his hobbies and sports to devote more time to the project because he knows that the work is always done by the few. He says it without bitterness.

Neither does Herr Blüm have any truck with party-political or ideological intrusion. He said that after a change of government in Burkina Faso, a CDU member of the local council suddenly decided that the twin-town arangement should not continue. Herr Blüm said he was able to convince the doubter that friendship was scarcely worth having if it was organised along political lines. "It has nothing to do with the politics of capital cities. It does have everything to do with getting to know and understand people."

But there are politically motivated arrangements. Critics point to the 1982 connection established between the CDU-governed *Land* of Rhineland-Palatinate and the East African nation of Ruanda.

In the past few years, many centres with Social Democrat majorities or strong representations of Greens have demonstratively become twin towns with centres in Nicaragua.

On the other hand, politics could not have been further from everyone's minds in 1966 when the choral society in Haintschen, in the Taunus, invited a choirs from Belgium and America to take part in a festival. An African student in the town was asked to find some of his compatriots to make a contribution.

So it was that 18 students from Malawi came to the town and gave a performance of songs and dancing. The performance was so successful that the local mayor, Karl Lieserung, kept up the contact with Malawi. Ever since, people from Malawi have always been welcome.

Twenty years later, the student who arranged the ensemble is still in contact. He returned home years ago. This year, young singers from Hainchen are to visit Malawi.

Petra Reategui

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 15 February 1987)

The Kurds, 20 million people without a land

The Kurdish institute in Bonn is promoting and backing a translation of the Bible into Kurdish. The book of Luke has been completed. Matthew, Mark and John will follow. Some of the works will appear as picture bibles for children with the text in both German and Kurdish (there are Christian as well as Muslim Kurds).

The head of the three-year-old institute is Geylani Yekta, a Kurd from the eastern part of Turkey. The institute is sort of offspring from the Kurdish institute in Paris, which has built up a rich tradition of promoting the Kurdish culture.

The foundation of the institute in Bonn was a sort of experiment because it cannot get any aid from its own State: there is no Kurdish state. Kurds, people without a nation, live in five countries. Four of them, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, are in the Middle East. The fifth, the Soviet Union, contains only a few of the estimated 20 million Kurds.

The aim of the institute is not only to spread information about the Kurds but also to enable Kurds themselves, spread as they are, to more easily recognise their cultural identity.

About 300,000 Kurds live in West Germany. Most came from eastern Turkey. These are difficult days for them. In eastern Turkey, northern Iraq and Iran, they are fighting bitter wars against the respective governments which are continuations of disputes from the 19th century. In Iraq, they do have a certain amount of local autonomy.

But the institute is mainly concerned with cultural affairs. It wants Germans to learn about the Kurds — and vice versa.

Germans have a reference point to Kurds in the works of author Karl May. Any German who knows anything at all about Kurds will probably have picked it up from reading "Through the wilds of Kurdistan".

Kurdish specialist and author Hans Hauser found that May's knowledge of the Kurds came from the travel writings of British adventurer and archaeologist Austen Henry Layard. Layard came across the Kurds during digs in northern Iraq in the 19th century. But neither Layard nor May were able to reveal the secrets of the Kurdish culture. That only happened this century.

The Kurds have been living for at least 3,000 years in the area which is still regarded as their principal area, in the mountains in western Iran and south-eastern Turkey.

The Kurdish language is an Iranian language. Perhaps the Kurds are related to the Iranian tribe, the Medes, who were also in western Iran and who were defeated by the Achaemenids in the 5th century BC.

Xenophon, the Greek mercenary and writer who set out with a force of Greek soldiers of fortune to take the Persian throne, relates the account of his defeat at the hands of the Achaemids and the subsequent flight in his *Anabasis*.

In it he also mentions the existence of a fierce, fighting mountain people called "Karduchen", who made life for the retreating Greeks extremely difficult.

The Kurds have been fighting their rulers on and off for hundreds of years, even after they became Muslims. Most became Sunnis but there are also some Shiites and some Christians as well.

In south-east Turkey, north of Aleppo in Syria and in some parts of northern Iraq live the Yezidi. Many of them are Kurds. The Yezidi have their own monotheist religion but it has elements of natural theologies.

The best-known figure in Kurdish history is Saladin (1138-1193) who was born of Kurdish descent in Tikrit, Mesopotamia, in modern-day Iraq. He later became the Sultan of Egypt. By 1186, he had united the Muslims against the Christian Crusaders. Saladin (Yusuf ibn-Ayyub Salah-al-Din) developed a reputation among both Christians and Muslims for his chivalrous conduct.

Ove the past 100 years, the Kurds have been forced more and more often to fight to defend their freedom. The year 1880 can perhaps be regarded as the birth of modern Kurdish nationalism. The Kurdish sheikh Ubaidallah organised a major insurrection which contrasted sharply with the sporadic, unconcer ted efforts until then.

There has been no peace since in Kurdish areas. The 20th century has been a chain of rebellions against Teheran, against Baghdad and against Constantinople and, later, Ankara. And that is still the situation.

The Kurdish institute in Bonn uses meetings and cultural evenings to spread the word. It shows, for example, films by Yilmaz Güney, the Kurdish director who recently died at the age of 47. He had been a popular actor in Turkey for many years, but his films are now banned there.

The institute has produced, in conjunction with Göttingen University, a book of Kurdish grammar in German. The first volume deals mainly with the dialect mostly spoken in northern areas. A second will deal with the southern dialect.

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